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LIKE A TRUMPET

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LIKE A TRUMPET

BY

CHARLES E. JEFFERSON

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LIKE A TRUMPET

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LIKE A TRUMPET

I

Lift up thy voice like a trumpet.
ISAIAH LVIII:1

MY TEXT is an exhortation from a Hebrew prophet recorded in the first verse of the fifty-eighth chapter of the Book of Isaiah. "Lift up thy voice like a trumpet." That does not mean yell. A trumpet does not yell. Nor does it mean, climb to the house top and scream, for a trumpet never screams. Nor does it mean, stand on the street corner and howl, for a trumpet does not know how to howl. A trumpet is a musical instrument and sends out a musical tone. It never screeches or thunders. Does the prophet, then, exhort his countrymen to lift up their voice musically? I think not. He is not thinking of music at all. He is thinking of something peculiar in the voice of a trumpet. He is thinking of the tone that is characteristic of a trumpet. He has been listening to the conversation of the people in Jerusalem, and there is something lacking. He has overheard what the people are saying one to another and he misses something. He misses the note of the trumpet. The magical something which lies at the heart of the tone of a trumpet was absent from the conversation which he heard in Jerusalem.

If one were asked to describe the tone of a trumpet, he would say, perhaps, first of all, that it is a positive tone. The voice of the trumpet is affirmative—assertive. It does not apologize nor waver. It is different from the tone of a flute. A flute is always more or less apologetic. It wavers. It comes to the ear in velvet slippers, saying, "I hope I am not disturbing you." A flute is often on the verge of

a tremolo. Not so with the voice of a trumpet. The trumpet is positive. The trumpet is bold. The trumpet is aggressive. It comes out to meet you. It challenges you. It says: "Here I am! Come on!"

It is also penetrating. It goes in. It finds the corpuscles of the blood. It sets the nerves vibrating. It awakens the mind. One cannot sleep when the trumpets are blowing. It is a moving tone. It moves to action. It appeals to the will. There are instruments which appeal to the heart. The violin does that. Sit down anywhere within reach of the sound of a violin, and whether you are paying attention to the music or not, you will find your mood changing. The tone of the violin has gotten in among the strings of your heart and they are all responding to the subtle music. Some instruments appeal to the imagination. The harp does that. When John heard harp music he began to dream of heaven. Whenever he listened to the music of heaven he was sure he could distinguish the tone of the harp. The trumpet appeals primarily to the will. It urges to action. Demosthenes had the trumpet note in his voice. Whenever he spoke to the Greeks they began to say, "Let us march against Philip!" The trumpet gave forth no uncertain sound when Demosthenes was speaking, and every Greek prepared himself for battle. The same note was in the voice of John the Baptist. While he was preaching men cried out, "What must we do?" The same note was in the voice of Simon Peter on the Day of Pentecost. After he had spoken awhile men began to ask, "What shall we do?" He told them what to do, and three thousand men did it on that very day. I presume that the distinctive note of the Christian religion is the note of the trumpet. It is positive, aggressive, penetrating, and moving. That is the tone that ought to be sounding in all Christian preaching and in all Christian conversation.

When I listen to the conversation of the Christian people

of our day I miss something. I miss the note of the trumpet. We are much like the people who lived in Jerusalem six hundred years before Jesus. We are a timorous crowd. We do not speak with the voice of the trumpet. We are browbeaten by the world. We are cowed to silence by the big city in which we live. Many Christians do not believe in the use of the tongue in religion. They think it is bad manners to talk about religion. They are vocal on every subject but the subject of religion. They are loquacious in politics and in art, in science and in ordinary gossip, but in the realm of religion they are dumb. They do not believe in talking about religion. They are afraid of getting into a controversy, and controversy is exceedingly disagreeable. Many people who are well-mannered shrink back from talking about religion because, if they express their opinions, they might give offense to somebody, and to hurt anybody is decidedly unpleasant. And so they keep still. There are many who never speak, and there are others who speak only in whispers. They do not think that it is proper to be positive in regard to anything. To be positive is to be dogmatic, and to be dogmatic is to be old-fashioned. There are two sides to every question, and therefore you must not make up your mind on which side you are. You must be open-minded. In other words, you must be empty-minded. You must not arrive at any conclusions. If you arrive at any conclusion, that shows you are bigoted and belated. A well-bred man or woman has no conclusions, and as for convictions they are survivals of a day that has gone. There are many members of the church who have no conclusions and no convictions, and therefore they cannot speak with the voice of a trumpet.

That was the state of society in the days of the Second Isaiah. The Hebrew people had been beaten into silence by the great city of Babylon. No Jew dared to lift up his voice with the sound of a trumpet. To coax into the voice

of his countrymen the trumpet note was one of the ambitions of the Second Isaiah. Hear him in the fortieth chapter in the thrilling exhortation: "Lift up your voice with strength. Lift it up. Do not be afraid. Behold your God." In other words: "Talk about God. Do not be afraid to talk about God. Why should you be afraid to talk about Him? Why should you hesitate to use your tongue in the cause of religion?" He comes back to the same idea in the fifty-eighth chapter of the book. "Cry aloud." More literally translated, "Cry with your throat! Bring your throat into your speech! Do not be content with using your lips, but allow the energy of your body to come into your tone. Do not spare. Do not hold back. Lift up your voice like the sound of a trumpet. Talk to the people about their transgressions. Speak to the nation about its sins." That was the exhortation needed by the people in the sixth century before Christ. That is the exhortation which is needed by American Christians today.

We need the note of the trumpet in our defense of the Christian church. Every man ought to be willing to stand up for his religion no matter where he is. His religion is always being attacked. In our day the church is made a subject of constant criticism and a target of merciless abuse. They are waging a furious war against it in Moscow, but the Bolsheviks are found in every city in the whole world. In every country the Christian church is being attacked. Some people sneer at it, others slander it, others trample on it, and what do Christians do? Many of them keep still. They hear it said that the church is an old fogy, or that the church is an old blunderbuss, or that the church is an old nobody, accomplishing nothing at all. They listen to this and say nothing. Sometimes they agree with what is being said. The enemies of the church slander it, and members of the church join in slandering it, too. There was a man named Simon Peter who, on a

certain occasion, found himself in the midst of the enemies of Jesus. These enemies said all sorts of derogatory things about Jesus, and Simon Peter never opened his mouth. Hour after hour he heard the hostile criticism, and hour after hour he said nothing. By and by he chimed in with what the enemies of Jesus were saying. He was too big a coward to lift up his voice like a trumpet in the court-yard of Caiphas, and sensible men and women through sixty generations have had no difficulty in making up their minds in regard to the conduct of that man Simon Peter. They have all agreed that on that occasion he was a sorry specimen of a Christian.

The Bible is everywhere criticized. Many people speak of it jocosely. They always have a new joke to tell you about the Bible. Others disparage the Bible. They put it on the level of all other books. They say the Bible is no more inspired than any other book. Now and then somebody declares that the Bible is no more inspired than Shakespeare. Whenever I hear a person say that, I begin to wonder whether he has ever read ten pages of Shakespeare, and I am absolutely certain that he knows nothing at all about the Bible. And what do Christians do when they hear a man saying the Bible is no more inspired than Shakespeare? Many of them keep silent. They have no voice at all, or if they speak, the sound of the trumpet is not in what they say.

We Christians are under bonds to use our voice, not only for purposes of defense, but for purposes of attack. It is our business to oppose evil. We are sent into the world to condemn wrong. The air is full of falsehoods, and it is our business to deny them. The world is full of evils, and it is our business to condemn them. But there are many Christians who do not believe that it is proper for them to condemn anything. They do not believe that anything

is bad enough to merit condemnation. Nobody, no matter how wicked, ought to be condemned. Everybody and everything ought to be commended or at least endured with good-natured complacency. It is because we have so many Christians of this type that the social evils of our day are rampant and increasingly mighty. Let me call your attention to just three of them. "What do you think of gambling?" A social student of our times, familiar with the currents of life in our generation, has recently declared that nothing has so nearly debauched the American people since the war as the gambling mania. We are rapidly becoming a nation of gamblers. Not only are men gambling, but women are gambling, too. Not only are adults gambling, but the boys and girls have entered on the same course. The experts in ethics agree in condemning gambling as one of the most dangerous of vices. Again and again it leads to suicide, and almost every day it drives some man to steal. When you read in the paper about a defalcation of a bank official, in nearly every case if you read on you will find that he was gambling. He lost money by gambling, then stole money in order to gamble again. It is a vice that unfits men for honest work. It creates an artificial atmosphere in which nothing good can flourish. It is one of the most nearly ineradicable of all the vices. A distinguished Englishman not long ago asked a prison warden what was the most irreclaimable class of criminals, and the prompt reply was, "the gamblers." This is the vice that is growing in America, and what are the Christian people saying about it? Many members of the church are gambling, too. There are Christian women who cannot play bridge without playing for money. They have played the game so long that it has become intolerably boresome unless they can add to the excitement of it by playing for money. It is one of the amazing phenomena of our day that so many Christian women have no moral stamina at

all. They can be wheedled into any fashion, no matter how silly, into any fad, no matter how degrading. They do not know how to lift up their voices like a trumpet.

Let us think for a moment about the evil of obscenity. Many of us have no conception of the extent of this evil. We have never taken the trouble to look into the matter, and we do not know what awful progress has been made within the last few years. We all know more or less about the theater. According to the expert judges the theater has never been so low as it is at the present hour. The majority of plays skirt the edges of the indecent just as closely as they can. When a person goes to a theater, unless he is informed beforehand, he never knows what vile thing he is going to see or hear. Our moving pictures are carrying on a great campaign of demoralization. It is said there are twenty million people attending the movies every day, and that sixty million different people attend them every week. It is estimated that three-quarters of all these millions are under twenty-five years of age. It is said by those who claim to be informed that fully a third of all the films slap at the sanctity of marriage. Our American films are notorious all the way around the world. One nation after another has been obliged to protest against them as a menace to public and domestic morality. The very name "America" has become a stench in the nostrils of multitudes of people in far-off countries. With all these moving-picture shows fighting against modesty, against decency, against the sanctity of marriage, it is not to be wondered at that the number of divorces in America climbs higher and higher every year. We are bringing up a generation of young people, many of whom are as depraved in their taste as were the pagans of ancient Rome. And what are the Christian people saying about this? In the realm of magazines and papers the situation is distressingly black. There is a great tide of filth flowing across

the land. You and I do not read this literature, but we ought to know that it exists. We have an appalling number of newspapers and magazines which are not fit to be read by decent people. Canada has been obliged to lift up her voice in protest. She has made a long list of American magazines and papers which she will not allow to cross the Canadian border. She is determined to make an honest effort to save her people from the pollution of our defiling publications. Even a smutty novel can become one of the best sellers. It could not become one of the best sellers if Christian people did not buy it. It is because multitudes of members of the Christian church have no conscience when it comes to reading dirty books, that these vile publications can make their authors a fortune. It is indeed an amazing thing that a man or woman who claims to be a follower of the holy-hearted Christ should be willing to get down and wallow in the slime that exudes from the rotten soul of a conscienceless reprobate who has sold himself to the devil. It is high time that Christian men and women everywhere throughout the land were lifting their voices like a trumpet against this destructive plague.

There is another evil against which our voice should be lifted. It is racial snobbery. This is one of the most disgraceful and one of the most perilous of all the vices of our modern world. It is not confined to any one country. It is found everywhere. Mr. Charles A. Selden, who a few years ago made a trip around the world, has just brought out a volume entitled, "Are Missions a Failure?" In that volume he tells about an interview he had with a distinguished Brahman in the City of Bangalore, Dr. Rama Rao. Mr. Selden asked the distinguished Indian physician why he was not a Christian and why he persisted in denouncing Christianity. Dr. Rao gave three reasons, and one of them was the insincerity of the professed followers of Jesus Christ. Dr. Rao claims that

Christianity does not exist anywhere in the world except as an impossible ideal. He backs up his assertion by giving a bit of his experience during a visit to Toronto, Canada, where he attended an international medical congress. As soon as he reached San Francisco he went into a barber shop to get shaved, but was immediately ordered out. The barber refused to shave him because his skin was somewhat darker than the skin of the barber. When he arrived in the city of Toronto and presented himself to the clerk of a hotel, the clerk refused to give him a room. When the Doctor pulled out his credentials to the medical congress the clerk relented somewhat, but gave him the worst room in the house. Feeling that it was unwise for him to present himself in the dining-room of the hotel, he went out to a restaurant. As soon as he seated himself at a table, two men rose to their feet and berated the proprietor in a loud tone for allowing such a man to come in, and then stalked out of the room. After that it was necessary for Dr. Rao to eat all his meals in his room. This is all the more noteworthy because Toronto is outwardly one of the most Christian cities on the American continent. The habit of church-going is more nearly universal there than in any other American city that I know anything about. And yet even in the city of Toronto it was impossible for one of the great physicians of India to be treated with courtesy or even decency. Surely the time has arrived for Christians to lift up their voices like a trumpet. The universal brotherhood of mankind is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, and if we are not going to treat colored men as our brothers, then it is absurd to go on claiming to be Christians at all. Better give up the Christian religion altogether than to profess it with our lips and to deny it in our conduct.

What is the cause of the anti-foreign feeling in China? Some people would try to induce you to believe that it is

solely due to the Bolsheviks of Moscow. Never believe such nonsense as that. It is true that the Bolsheviks have agitated the current of feeling here and there, but they are not responsible for the tremendous volume of anti-foreign feeling now flowing over China. The root cause of it is the insufferable arrogance and the unbearable snobbery of the white men who have gone there from the West. I wonder sometimes that a solitary Western man or woman is allowed to live in that country. It is simply unbelievable the extremes to which white snobbery is carried in countries inhabited by colored peoples. The time has arrived to lift up our voices like a trumpet. It is no time to speak in whispers or in apologetic phrases. We must use the note of a trumpet. We must speak in tones that are positive and aggressive, that pierce and move. Here in America we need nothing more than just that—the note of the trumpet. Whenever you see a Chinese boorishly treated, stand up for him, defend him, befriend him! Whenever you see a Japanese discourteously treated, stand up for him. Be his friend. Protect him against the American boor who has disgraced himself and his country by being impolite to a stranger! When you see a Negro unjustly treated, stand up for him. Protect him. His skin is black but he is a child of God. Lift up your voice like a trumpet against every man who would do him wrong!

We must do this because we are followers of the trumpet-tongued Christ. Christ always lifted up his voice like a trumpet. He was not afraid to talk about religion. That was the burden of his speech everywhere. He was not ashamed to talk about God. That was his favorite theme. He went up and down the land talking about God. He was not afraid to condemn men for their vices. All the leading classes in the city of Jerusalem hated him for no other reason than that. He condemned their sins. Against the social evils of his generation he stood up with

a courage that never flinched. He struck the leading men of his day with a tongue that did not spare. No such fiery condemnation ever came out of a human throat as came out of his against the wrongdoers of his country. He threw himself whole-heartedly into the greatest of all causes, the extension of the kingdom of good will. His one supreme ambition was to establish on the earth a brotherhood. And what was his reward? What did the world give him in return for his efforts? His reward was the cross. He lifted up his voice like a trumpet, and men crucified him. The church is never going to save this world until it is willing to be crucified.

FAITH IN A STORM

II

How is it that you have no faith?
MARK IV:40.

I AM going to take for my text a question of our Lord. It is recorded in the fortieth verse of the fourth chapter of the Second Gospel, "How is it that you have no faith?" Jesus was not speaking to a crowd, but to the Twelve; not to unbelievers, but to disciples, men who believed in him; not to enemies, but to friends, comrades, companions, co-workers in a great campaign. The question was asked in a tone of surprise, "How is it that you have no faith?" He had called them and they had responded to his call and they had now followed him for a long time. They had listened eagerly to his teaching. They had gazed attentively into his face as though they were taking in everything he said. He had often spoken to them about faith. He was always extolling it, calling attention to its beauty and its power, dwelling on the necessity of it. He was in the habit of speaking in this fashion: "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed." That was the smallest seed that a Palestinian farmer knew anything about. That was not the day of chemistry. People did not know anything about atoms. Translated into our language the sentence would run, "If you have an atom of faith you would say to this mountain." A mountain is the most immovable thing on the face of the earth. We can move almost anything else. A mole hill we can kick out of our way. A good-sized hill we can cut down by the apparatus which we have cleverly devised, but we cannot do anything with a mountain except bore a hole through it. We cannot move it. The dis-

ciples were familiar with mountains. They knew Mount Tabor, but Mount Tabor is nothing but a good-sized hill. It is not even 2,000 feet high. The Disciples knew Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. These are good-sized mountains rising about 3,000 feet above the sea. But on this particular occasion our Lord was at the base of Mount Hermon, the tallest mountain which a Palestinian Jew knew anything about. It rose 9,000 feet above the sea and wore through most of the year a crown of snow. Jesus said, "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you can say to this mountain move and it will move." That is an illustration of how a man can use language when he knows how to do it. A pedant or a literalist or a man with a picayunish mind cannot do anything with the Bible. The Bible was not written for that sort of a man. To understand the Bible a man must have poetry in him and imagination and a sensitive spiritual understanding. What Jesus is saying is this: "If you have a very little faith you will be able to do the impossible." But that is a tame way of saying it. Nobody would be likely to remember a saying like that beyond sundown. Jesus said, "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you will say to old Mount Hermon 'Move over to yonder place' and it will move." No one could ever forget a saying like that.

Jesus had placed such emphasis upon faith and had talked about it so much that he expected his disciples to possess it, but now all at once they are caught in a great storm on the sea. The waves were rough. They beat into the boat. The boat seemed to be filling, and Jesus was asleep. The disciples were frightened. It is no wonder they were. They were face to face with death. Nearly everybody is afraid when death stares him in the face. We can talk about death with a smile and with an even pulse when death seems far away, but when it comes right up to us and looks us squarely in the eye, we are frightened. The

disciples were frightened and they were also indignant. They were indignant at Jesus because it seemed that he was indifferent to their safety. They shook him awake and said, "Don't you care whether we drown?" And Jesus opened his sleepy eyes and said to the sea, "Be still," and then, looking at his disciples exclaimed, "How is it that you have no faith! It is the one thing which you must have and yet you have not got it yet."

The word *faith* is one of the key words of the New Testament. Faith is one of the A B Cs of the Christian religion. It is one of the elementary things which must be mastered if a Christian is to read the meaning of life. And yet many Christians do not know what faith is. You have heard one of them say, "I don't know whether I have any faith or not." A person who says that does not know what faith is. We are all the time using the word in cheap and shallow senses. I have heard a man say of another man, "He has the most wonderful faith I have ever seen. He believes that every syllable of the whole Bible is divinely and infallibly inspired." But that is not faith in the Christian sense. If that is faith I would not want it. I have heard a man say of another man, "His faith is extraordinary. He has more faith than any man I have ever known. He believes that Jesus Christ is coming in the immediate future to put an end to all the sin and misery in the world and to set up the kingdom of God in every land." But that is not faith in the Christian sense. If that is faith, I cannot get it. There is no way possible by which I can ever get it. I should be obliged to live and die without faith. If you want to know what faith really is, then, you cannot do better than read the eleventh chapter of the Letter to the Hebrews. Faith is all pictured out there in vivid colors so that you cannot fail to see exactly what it is. The writer of the Letter gives many illustrations. I want to pick out only five of them. He begins, as you remember, with

Abraham. He calls attention to nothing in Abraham but his faith. Abraham looms colossal silhouetted against the misty background of the distant past, and the reason why he is visible to all succeeding generations is because he was a man of faith. He went out not knowing whither he was going. He left home because he was not satisfied. He was not satisfied with the kind of life he was living. He felt he was living on too low a level. He was not satisfied with the way in which his community was living. The community also was too low down. He felt there must be a higher plane on which to live. He longed to become a part of a higher civilization, and so he went out not knowing whither, confident of only one thing, that it was possible for him to find a more worthy and satisfying way of living. Or to put it in the picturesque language of the author, "He went out seeking for a city whose builder and maker is God." His heart was set on the City of God. He was a man of faith.

Moses is the next illustration. He holds a high position in the court of Pharaoh. He has a big salary and no end of honors, but his countrymen are slaves. He hates slavery. He loves freedom. He knows that his countrymen ought to be free, and so he puts himself at the head of them and starts out not knowing whither he is going. He knows the general geographical direction, but he does not know what obstacles he is going to meet or what delays he is going to suffer or what disappointments are going to pierce his heart. He knows but one thing, that men ought to be free and that it is his duty to help them obtain their freedom. In spite of all the sacrifices, he gives himself to a noble cause. He is a man of faith.

Now, let us look at Gideon. His country was the victim of repeated attacks by the Midianites. The Midianites were very numerous, so numerous that an ancient historical writer could say of them that they filled all the valley like

a swarm of locusts. They seemed as multitudinous as the sands of the seashore. Their camels could not be counted. Gideon had only a few men on whom he could rely. He had no weapons made of steel. He had a few trumpets and a few torches and a few pitchers. He gave to each one of his three hundred men a trumpet and a torch and a pitcher. Having gathered his followers together, he told them that at a given signal every man was to blow his trumpet as loud as he could, and then smash his pitcher, making as much noise as possible, and then to lift up the torch which had been released by the breaking of the pitcher and wave it above his head as fast as he could. The order was obeyed and the triumph was great. The Midianites had never seen it after that fashion and they were thrown into panic. They were so wild to get away that they trampled on one another. They even killed one another in their fury to escape the fury of Gideon's army. Gideon was a man of faith.

We come next to David. David was only a boy. Sometimes it is necessary to fall back on the boys. Men as they grow older often lose their faith. They are afraid to venture. They refuse to take risks. They become prudent and cautious. And when men are simply prudent and cautious they are no longer of worth in the building of a better world. David had faith. There was a big giant who every day insulted the Israelite army, strutting and boasting in a most insolent manner, and none dared to answer his challenge. David had nothing but a sling, and nothing to put in the sling but a smooth stone, and what could he do with a stone in dealing with a giant clothed in armor? But David did not walk by sight. He walked by faith. This universe is too big for us to walk in it by sight. There are imponderable forces which are invisible to our physical eye, and it is impossible for anyone to measure the extent of his resources if he is fighting for the right or the

truth. David was fighting for the truth, and therefore he was not afraid of the giant. He threw the stone and the giant came crashing down to the earth. David gave an immortal exhibition of faith.

Now, let us look for a moment at the prophets. The writer does not name any one in particular. He groups them all together because they have common characteristics. They were men who in their generation had fought for the truth and the right. Of course, they were resisted and maligned and hated. Many of them were kicked out of decent society and some of them were killed. Nevertheless, they subdued kingdoms and worked out the principle of justice into wider social applications. They stopped the mouths of lions and quenched the violence of fire and turned to flight the armies of the enemies. The world was not worthy of them. The world did not appreciate them, but nevertheless they are the men who have made the world worth living in. They were men of faith.

We have now gone far enough, I am sure, to understand what the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews understood by faith. To him it is a spiritual force. It is the spirit of adventure in the cause of truth and right. A man of faith goes out not knowing whither he is going. He cannot know the experiences through which he must pass or the things which he must suffer. It is the spirit of daring. A man of faith dares to speak for truth and to stand up for the right, no matter how great the risk. It is the spirit of sacrifice. A man of faith is ready to pay the price no matter what the price may be. The poets have known what faith is. Frederick W. Faber knew when he wrote his little poem—

> Right is right since God is God,
> And right the day must win.
> To doubt would be disloyalty,
> To falter would be sin.

William Cullen Bryant knew what faith is when he wrote,

> Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,
> The eternal years of God are hers.

James Russell Lowell knew what faith is when he wrote,

> Truth forever on the scaffold,
> Wrong forever on the throne,
> But the scaffold sways the future,
> And behind the dim unknown
> Standeth God within the shadow,
> Keeping watch above His own.

This scene on the little Sea of Galilee, reported in the Gospel according to St. Mark, is interesting because it is a picture of our own situation. We are in a great storm of wind. The sea is rough and the waves are beating into the boat, and God seems to be asleep. All through the world war He seemed to be asleep. He allowed ten million boys to be butchered and never opened His eyes. He allowed hundreds of thousands of women to starve to death and tens of thousands of children to be blown to pieces by the pitiless guns and did not seem to know what was going on. He seems to be asleep yet. It looks as though He were asleep in Asia, for millions of people are starving to death and mothers are eating the emaciated bodies of their dead children. He seems to be asleep in England, for in England there are over a million men out of work. They have been out of work for years. There is no work now for them to do. The tragedy of poverty has saddened the eyes of the women and you can see the marks of it on the faces of little children, and God does nothing. He seems to be asleep in the United States, for all our largest American cities are the victims of bandits, some of them low-downs, vulgar thugs and some of them officials in high positions. God seems to be asleep. The waves are beating

into the boat. The criticism against the church is ferocious. The opposition to Christianity is fierce. The attack on religion is violent and venomous. You hear people saying Professor So-and-so says that the New Testament is a collection of legends and myths. Mr. X has brought out a brilliant book in which he says that the dogmas of Christianity are exploded. They say that "the advanced thinkers have given up Christianity. They do not believe in religion at all." Many Christians are alarmed. Some of them are almost indignant that Christ should allow the church to get into such a predicament. They ought to listen for a voice coming out of the storm, "How is it that you have no faith? Are you afraid of Professor So-and-so? Don't you know that professors have always been saying things against Christianity, but the boat has not gone down? Don't you know that in every generation brilliant men have written against the church, but the boat has not gone down?" There is no living writer who is so brilliant as Voltaire. Voltaire thought the boat was going down, but he was mistaken. If the advanced thinkers have given up Christianity, it is nothing new. Advanced thinkers have always persisted in going ahead of Jesus and have invariably been lost in the mist. There is no cause for alarm. The waves are beating into the boat, but the boat is not going down.

It is not going down because Jesus is in the boat. The man who wrote the Letter to the Hebrews did not ask us to keep our eyes upon Abraham and Moses and the rest of them. He said, "Keep your eyes on Jesus, for he is the supreme hero of faith." He had the spirit of adventure. He went out not knowing whither he was going. When he turned his face to go to Capernaum he did not know what the future held in store. It was only many months afterward that it dawned on him little by little that he was really going to Jerusalem to be crucified. He

had the spirit of daring. He was not afraid of anybody or of anything. Cæsar was the Goliath of that day, but Jesus was not afraid of Cæsar. He stood before the representative of the Roman Empire, saying, "To this end was I born, for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth." He was not afraid of Pilate, but Pilate was afraid of him. He had the spirit of sacrifice. He made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

He walked by faith and not by sight. It looked as though God cared nothing for the individual. It looked that way, but the fact is that even a little bird cannot die without God taking notice of its death. "God cares nothing for the individual man." That is the way it looks. God cares even for one little bird. That is the way it is. It looked as though all his work had been done in vain. Nazareth slammed the door in his face and so did Capernaum, and so did Bethsaida, and so did Chorazin, and so did Jerusalem. But standing outside the closed doors he said: "Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." A man on God's side cannot be defeated, no matter how many doors are closed and barred. It looked as though his ideals were impracticable. It looked as though all his dreams were idle. It looked as though the human race would never accept his leadership. In the last week of his life an ugly muttering was heard all through the city of Jerusalem: "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him! We will not have this man to reign over us." Men hissed at him like so many serpents, but right in the midst of the hissing he calmly said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." He is the hero of faith.

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
Of our life's wild restless sea;
Day by day His sweet voice soundeth,
Saying "Christian, follow me."

FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS

III

He made them wander in the wilderness forty years.
NUMBERS XXII: 13.

GOD made the Israelites wander in the wilderness. They were on their way to Canaan. They had been slaves in Egypt and they have been delivered and are on the journey to the promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey. But God keeps them outside this land of promise. He compels them to wander in the wilderness. They live forty years in the region of sand and rock, where the serpents bite and the adders sting.

The promised land was not far away. It is only two hundred miles from Mount Sinai to Beersheba, but it took them forty years to go that distance. It is only sixty miles from Kadish Barnea to Hebron—not nearly so far as from New York to New Haven—and yet to enter the promised land from Kadish required thirty-seven and a half years.

They wandered forty years. That is a long time. That is the life of a generation. The mighty host which departed from Egypt never reached the land of promise. They died in the wilderness. All the women died. Even Miriam died. All the men except two died. Even Aaron died. Caleb and Joshua were allowed to go in, but Moses could not enter. He came close enough to see the beautiful land. For a moment he caught a gleam of its glory, but with that gleam in his eyes they closed in death. Even Moses died in the wilderness.

If you ask why could they not go in, the answer is that they were not the kind of men who could take possession of a promised land, or hold it even if they should get it.

They had the disposition and the mental habits of slaves. They had been in slavery so long that the power of the will had been eaten out. They had no tenacity of will. They were wavering and fickle as children. They were easily discouraged. A danger threw them into panic. An obstacle made their heart faint. They were always complaining. Again and again they found fault with Moses. At times they rose in insurrection against him. More than once they threatened to go back to Egypt.

This cowardice was due to their lack of religious convictions. They had a religion, but it was not a power in their life. They had an ark, but it did not symbolize anything which had found a place in their soul. They had a series of laws, but the laws were written on tables of stone and not on their hearts. There was no steadfastness in themselves because they had no real faith in God. Their religion was a ritual and not a power by which they lived.

And so there was nothing for them but the wilderness. They were not fit for anything better. The land of promise was waiting for them but they could not enter it until they had gotten rid of their servile habits and dispositions. They had to tarry until there grew up in their soul religious convictions. It was necessary for them to wait until they had mastered the first principles of living together and working together for a common end. All of this comes out in an episode narrated in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of the Book of Numbers.

The story can be told in a few sentences. When the Israelites reached Kadish Barnea Moses sent twelve men north to investigate. They were gone about six weeks, and when they returned they brought a unanimous report in regard to the fertility of the land. It was indeed all that it had been pictured to be, and as proof of its fertility they brought samples of various kinds of fruit which they found growing there, figs and pomegranates and grapes.

It was a land flowing with milk and honey. They all agreed on that, but these twelve men did not agree as to the possibility of taking possession of the land. Two of them—Joshua and Caleb—said that it could be taken, and they urged that it be taken at once. But the other ten told a different story. They dwelt on the stature of the men they had found there, and of the strength of their walled cities, and declared that the land was inhabited by giants of such immense size that the Israelites in their presence felt like so many grasshoppers, and they went on to add that when these giants looked on them they looked at them in a way which clearly showed that in the opinion of the giants the Israelites were grasshoppers indeed.

This story struck consternation to the hearts of the people. They were so stirred up they could not sleep. They bawled all night long like a lot of babies, sobbing—"Would to God we had died in Egypt! Would to God we had died in the wilderness!" When morning came Joshua and Caleb tried to quiet their hearts, but all in vain. Their appeals only created exasperation and the people were on the point of stoning them to death. In their desperation they elected a leader who would conduct them back to Egypt. The Hebrew historian cannot tell the story without showing his hot condemnation. He goes so far as to say that God himself was disgusted with them and had a notion to wipe them out with an awful pestilence, and that he would have done it had not Moses pleaded with him to be merciful and patient. God did not destroy them, but he condemned them to wander in the wilderness. He kept them there until they died. Only two of them were permitted to enter the land of promise—the two who believed it was possible to go in. Men who feel like grasshoppers are never allowed to take possession of any land of promise. And so the Israelites did not go into the land flowing with milk and honey because they were lacking in character. It was their character

which kept them out. Being what they were, there was no place for them but the wilderness, and there they lived and died.

Let us think this morning of three lands of promise. The first of these is the land of sobriety, the land freed from the awful curse of drink, the land in which mothers do not sob themselves to sleep because their son is going down into a drunkard's grave; the land in which wives do not tremble when they hear their husbands' footfall on the stair, not knowing whether they will receive another beating; the land in which children never go to bed hungry because their father has spent his wages on drink; the land in which the community is not terrorized by frenzied men who have put an enemy into their mouths to steal away their brains; the land in which society is not blasted by an institution which is the rendezvous of harlots and thugs and scurvy politicians; the land in which industry is not crippled by wage-earners failing to report on Monday morning because they have not recovered from their Sunday debauch; the land in which jails and asylums and almshouses are not crowded with the human wreckage piled up by the demon of drink. That is a beautiful land, and every Moses has carried it in his eye. That is a land which God has promised, and toward that land humanity is moving. It was William E. Gladstone who years ago said in the House of Commons that the ravages of drink were equal to the combined ravages of famine and pestilence and war. Men of vision have long looked toward the land of promise. A few years ago our people set their faces in that direction. They put an amendment into the Constitution prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors to be used as a beverage. The promised land seemed near. Jubilant souls cried, "Now we are going in!" The Volstead Act was passed. "Now we are sure to go in." The

Mullan-Gage law was passed. "We are going in at once!" So did many think. But, alas! we are not in.

With the repeal of Prohibition, we are still in the desert. We are likely to be there forty years. The land of promise is near, but we cannot go in. We have not enough character to take possession of this promised land. We have the disposition and mental habits of slaves. It has not been enough to pass laws; they must be enforced. The character of a nation is not revealed in the laws which it writes. That character is revealed in the laws it enforces. It is in the enforcement of the law that moral character receives its severest test.

And we have been a nation of lawbreakers. What laws do we ever enforce, except in a desultory and procrastinating and lukewarm manner? We do not enforce them because we have not manhood enough. We allow them to be broken because our character is weak. See how character crumpled up in contact with this prohibition law. A policeman was offered a bribe and he collapsed, a juryman was the victim of a grudge and failed to do his duty. A judge was in sympathy with the friends of disorder, and fell below the demand of his high calling. A physician wanted to make money, and wrote lawbreaking prescriptions. A druggist wanted to make money and converted his store into a saloon. An agent of the government with an itch for gold sold the cause he was paid to defend. A citizen of the Republic in order to put money into his purse sank into the criminal classes and became a traitor to us all. Why do we not go into the promised land? Because we have so little moral stamina. See the men falling here and there, everywhere, going to pieces because their character is rotten. That is the rotten spot in our American character. If our Republic goes down, it will go down because we are rotten at that point. We have scant reverence for law, and we have not moral character enough to enforce

the laws which we pass. In the presence of the lawbreakers we act like so many grasshoppers.

Why cannot we go in? Because we have the dispositions and appetites of slaves. The Israelites could never forget the fleshpots of Egypt. They were slaves there, but they often had their stomachs well filled. They wanted to enter the promised land, but when the journey called for sacrifice, they rebelled and turned their faces longingly toward Egypt. So it is today. The fleshpot is the bottle. They would like to have the world enter the land of promise, but they object to making any sacrifices in order that we may arrive there. "Oh, that I may reach for the bottle, at any time of day or night! Oh, that I may always have my bottle." That is the cry of a man who has the soul of a slave. He does not care for humanity. He puts his own selfish pleasure first. He is not devoted to the cause of progress. He wants to tickle his nerves. Sensuous indulgence comes first. "Oh, let us go back to the fleshpots of Egypt!"

A second land of promise is a warless world. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." That is the promise. Moses has carried that beautiful land for centuries in his eye. The world in which there are no battleships, no submarines, no target practice on the water, no bayonet drill upon the land. Think of a world without a bayonet, and without poison gas, and without an airplane putting a blot on heaven by its antics in mastering the art of dropping bombs upon sleeping cities. All men of vision see that world. They catch the gleam of its glittering spires, they feel the uplift of its joy and peace and singing. A world in which munition-makers do not grow fat at the expense of the toiling millions, a world in which humanity is not terrorized by poisoned gossip and lying rumors of wars that are about to come, a world in which nations do

not groan under budgets created by the lords of war, while all the establishments of peace are handicapped and crippled because the resources of the people are squandered on the instruments of blood. That land is not far away, but humanity does not enter in. Why? Because we are slaves to old traditions, older than the times of Rameses II. We are the victims of old suspicions and ancient hatreds, older than the oldest of the Pharaohs. We wander in the wilderness because we are not men of religious faith. We have a religion, but it is largely a religion of ritual. We go through religious forms, but we do not believe in God. We do not believe in love. Our religion is not a moving, all-conquering power in our lives. Like the ancient Israelites, we have the name of God and the decalogue, but the law of God is not written in our hearts, and therefore we are cowards in the presence of the giants who are determined that the policy of preparedness shall be continued everlastingly, and that nations shall keep on practicing the art of war. In the presence of the old ideals and customs we feel ourselves grasshoppers, and that is why we must stay forty years in the region of sand and rock where the serpents hiss and the wild beasts roam.

The third promised land is a united world. God has made of one all the nations to live together. Humanity is on the way to an organized international life, a life so complete and beautiful that it lies before the imagination like a city with walls that flash like jewels. All the kings of the world are going to bring their wealth into this city. All the kingdoms are going to become the kingdom of the King of Love. Every knee is going to bow to him and every tongue is going to confess that he is Master. That is the promised land. Toward that land mankind is marching, but as yet we are in the wilderness. We cannot enter in. Two thousand years ago Paul declared that the whole creation was groaning and travailing in pain waiting for

the appearance of a nobler type of man. What is the world groaning for today? The emergence of a higher type of man. We are timorous and fumbling creatures. We are afraid of Anak and his blustering sons. We shrink from going on ahead and taking part in the organization of the life of the world. There must be a league of nations, a society, a federation, a family of nations, and this must be the creation of the human brain and heart. In this great work America should have a foremost place. How can we ever do our work so long as we persist in acting like children? Some people despise the idea of a league of nations, because it was as they think Mr. Wilson's idea. They call it a Democratic idea, and for Democratic ideas they have no place in all their thought. They do not know that Mr. Taft had the idea before Mr. Wilson had it. Many Democrats despised the idea in the earlier years because it was a Republican idea. It is not a Democratic idea, nor is it a Republican idea, it is an American idea, and every American ought to be loyal to it. The idea of leaguing nations is the brightest idea we have ever given to the world. The work of leaguing nations is the one work of supreme significance which God has permitted us to perform. We began this work in the eighteenth century. We leagued thirteen nations. It was a difficult thing to do it, but we did it. There were many giants to oppose, but thank God they all were conquered. Our forefathers were not grasshoppers. They had no fear of giants. We forget sometimes that Europe is only a little larger than the United States, and that our states are as large as nations. Our own Empire State is larger than Portugal, larger than Holland, larger than Belgium, larger than Switzerland, larger than Serbia, larger than Bulgaria; in population we are larger than Norway and Sweden combined, larger than Ireland and Scotland combined. And we have leagued forty-eight nations—extending all the way from the Atlantic to the

Pacific—nations some of which are three thousand miles apart. We have organized these into a unit and brought them all into subjection to one Supreme Court. That is the American idea. Now if we can league Maine and Oregon, Massachusetts and California, Rhode Island and Idaho, why cannot nations be leagued separated by 3,000 miles of water? Why cannot Great Britain and the United States be leagued, the United States and France and Italy and all the other nations of Europe, all the other nations of the world? Why cannot we have a federation of nations all of which are bound to submit their disputes to the arbitrament of a world court? The world cannot get on without a league of nations. There must be a league, and we must be in it. Let us put away our childishness and cease to indulge in mutual recriminations. No matter whose fault it was that we are not in the present League, let us see to it that we go in—if not into the present League, at least into some other league which shall take the place of the League in its present form. Let us put an end to the present tragedy of lagging behind with Turkey and Mexico when we ought to be in the forefront of those who are engaged in organizing the life of the world. In a crucial hour when the whole world expected our help, we have held aloof, to our everlasting disgrace!

But the world will be leagued. The stars in their courses are fighting for that. All these men who oppose a leagued world and who whimper about the giants are only for a day. They will die in the wilderness. They are not fit for a land of promise. Our only hope is in the cemetery. If men did not die humanity could make no progress. Thank God, then, for death. The cowards and slaves are buried in the wilderness, but the Calebs and Joshuas press on. They go in. Parents, bring up your children to be Joshuas and Calebs. Breathe into them the spirit of indomitable courage and hope. Take out of their heads all fear of

Anak, all inclination to look back to the fleshpots of Egypt. Teach them to look ahead. Bring them up to believe in God. Train them to work for others, for the sublime ends of human existence.

We are on the way to the land of promise. Our generation will die in the wilderness, but other men—nobler and stronger—will come after us, and to them God will fulfill his promise. Humanity is moving forward. It is going toward a land which flows with milk and honey. It is marching toward the city whose gates are pearl, whose streets are gold, whose foundations flash like precious stones, and whose atmosphere is filled with the light which falls from the face of God.

THE UNPOPULARITY OF THE PURITAN

IV

"And overthrew their tables."
JOHN 1:15.

THAT the Puritans were unpopular is known to every boy and girl in the high school. The very name is a nickname, a term of derision and contempt, a word coined in the mint of obloquy, soaked in vitriol, hurled by slanderous tongues for the purpose of making blisters and inflicting wounds. It was a malodorous word, and even today when heated on a certain type of tongue it gives forth an unsavory odor. Do not men still say with a sneer and a leer, "He is a Puritan"? To be Puritanic is to be bigoted, narrow, cruel, Pharisaical, and generally contemptible. To many of the men of their age the Puritans were disagreeable and exasperating; to some of their contemporaries they were loathsome and abominable. Through their lifetime they were hated, detested, execrated, and after they were dead their memory was held in abhorrence. For nearly three centuries they have been followed by continuous and pitiless abuse and vituperation, and in many circles of our modern world there is no one found willing to do them reverence. Schools of historians have vied with one another in exploiting their blunders and blackening their reputation, and literary artists have painted a picture of them calculated to draw out a hiss of contempt from the lips of succeeding generations. That they were unpopular, repellent, abhorrent to a large part of the world for which they labored and sacrificed is one of the best-known facts of history.

Have you ever asked yourself what was the cause of

this deep-rooted dislike, this widespread and extraordinary detestation? Why were these men so pelted with invectives while they were still alive, and why have they been repeatedly taken from their graves, hung on the gibbet, and exposed to the contumely of generations who never saw their faces? An answer to this question is to be found only by a careful study of history. Their unpopularity was due to their attitude to the world in the midst of which they lived, and what that attitude was it is worth our while to study and ponder.

What is the attitude which a Christian should take to the world of which he is a part? This is a question which confronts the follower of Jesus at the beginning and it pursues him to the end. Saint John in one of his letters says: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If a man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." That the nature of man is evil and that the world is the center and seat of forces inimical to the will and purposes of God is one of the axioms of the Christian religion. What shall be the attitude of a man, consecrated to the ideal life, to this evil-thoughted, corrupt-hearted, mischief-working world? Two clean-cut and definite answers have been given to this question, and each has worked itself out into a specific type of character and a particular stamp of civilization.

The first and most natural answer is: "Flee from the world! Get away! Come out from among wicked men. Touch not the unclean thing. Are there evil customs? Give them up and hide yourself from their injurious influence. Are there social relations which have become contaminated? Then renounce them and live a life of self-abnegation. Are there institutions which have absorbed the poison of the world? Escape from their defiling touch,

and in a little world removed from the great world in which the devil does his work give yourself up to holy contemplation and assiduous prayer." Here is an answer clear, simple, and consistent. Every mind can understand it. To thousands it has had a fascination too strong to be resisted. This answer is written large in the history of Christianity and is known as monasticism. Under monasticism men do not live in society, they live in monasteries. Their life is separated from the life of the world. The sexual instinct is the cause of boundless sin and woe, and therefore it should be crucified. Men take the vow of celibacy. Property is the channel through which a horde of temptations and burdens come to the heart, and therefore property must be surrendered. Men take the vow of poverty. Freedom is the spring from which flow streams of disorder, and therefore it must be given up. Men take the vow of obedience to some ecclesiastical superior whose surer judgment can be relied upon and whose more abundant wisdom will save the soul from foolish choices and fruitless wanderings.

But when the answer of monasticism had shown itself to be mistaken, an Augustinian monk by the name of Luther came out to announce a message which flooded the world with light. The strokes of the hammer with which he nailed his theses to the old church door in Wittenberg awakened men everywhere. Once awake, they began to ask themselves, What should be the Christian attitude to a world which is filled with corruption? Here and there was a man who said, A Christian man must not run away from evil; he must fight it. He must not hide; let him stand out in the open. He must not separate himself from men, he must coöperate with them in the pulling down of strongholds. Let him not be afraid of the world, but let him take hold of it with both his hands and mold it into a shape which shall be pleasing unto God. If customs are

bad, let him change them; if manners are evil, let him reform them; if social relations have become demoralizing, let them be cleansed; if institutions have grown corrupt, let the corruption be purged out; if the forces of evil are mighty, then let the children of light put on the whole armor of light and fight, every man in his place, for humanity and God. If home has become defiled, then purify it; if the state has become corrupt, then purify it; if the church has become stained, then purify it. Men who spoke after this fashion became known as Puritans, because they were always talking of purity, and not only talked about it, but started out at once to do the work which they saw had to be done. Society had grown frivolous and dissolute, and they took hold of it; the state had become tyrannical and oppressive, and they laid hands upon it; the church had grown superstitious and corrupt, and they began to strip her of her pagan finery and to clothe her in the robes of righteousness. These men were reformers. Calvin was a theologian, but he cleaned up Geneva. Knox was a preacher, but he defied and conquered a vain and untruthful queen. Cromwell was a farmer, but he took off the head of a king. The Puritan is the antithesis of the monk. Puritanism is a flat contradiction of monasticism. The monk runs and hides. The Puritan stands and fights. The monk prays and ministers to men who have been wounded and crippled by society; the Puritan also prays, but works to change the structure and temper of society that men may not be wounded or crippled. The Puritan of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries went at once into politics, determined to correct the abuses and usher in a new regime. He went into commerce, knowing that commerce brings wealth and that with wealth he would help forward the kingdom of God. He went into society undaunted by its sneers and not afraid of its threats, pulling down standards which were ancient and overthrowing

customs which had had the sanction of many generations. By the might of his genius he created three worlds—a new world of politics, a new commercial world, and a new social world.

Jesus by the overturning of the tables made his suffering and his crucifixion sure. And so it was with the Puritan. He put his hand upon the tables, he overturned them, he interfered with vested interests, he put an end to age-long abuses, he trampled upon the golden coins of men. What could the world do but hate him? The disciple must be as a master, and the servant as his lord! If men called the perfect man Beelzebub, do not marvel at the list of epithets which they hurl at his imperfect followers. In the great temple of society frivolous and selfish men and women had set up their tables piled high with absurd customs, foolish fashions, demoralizing practices, and the Puritan burning with indignation at the profanation of human life, overthrew the tables and sent the accursed conventionalities rolling in the dust. He got hated for his trouble. In the temple of state, cruel and despotic kings had set up their tables and covered them over with precedents and arguments constructed by hireling lawyers, proving that kings have a divine right to govern wrong and that under no circumstances have subjects a right to resist their ruler, and the Puritan overthrew the tables and sent the lying legal documents rolling under the feet of men. Venomous vituperation was his reward. Ambitious and worldly men had set up their tables in the temple of religion and had weighted them down with interpretations and doctrines and ceremonies which made of no effect the law of God and corrupted the simple religion of the Son of Man into a superstition and a burden, and the Puritan with hands hot with indignation overthrew the tables and sent the claims and works of priestcraft rolling on the ground. Murderous, unrelenting detestation was the

Puritan's compensation. Be not surprised that the Puritan was unpopular. He was a reformer, and when have reformers ever been popular among the people whose wicked thoughts they have rebuked and whose sinful ways they have resisted? The Puritan interfered with men's pleasures, he intruded into realms into which religious men had never gone, he pushed himself into circles in which kings and princes had reigned supreme, he threw himself across the track of the world's ambitions and endeavors, and that is why he has hung on the gibbet for well-nigh three hundred years. He saved others, but himself he could not save.

But some one at this point interrupts me with the remark that the Puritans were too severe, entirely too grave and sober. That is because they were soldiers in the midst of a tremendous battle. I have noticed that no painter who has attempted to paint Pickett's charge at Gettysburg has painted a smile on the face of a single soldier. War is grim and earnest work, and the only smile that is seen on the battlefield is the smile that flits across the face of the wounded man, who, in the moment of death, thinks how glorious it is to die for one's country. But some one says, the Puritan made mistakes. So he did, because he was a man of action. Men of action always commit blunders. But no matter how many blunders a man of action is guilty of, he is a nobler and more useful man than he who attempts to do nothing. Simeon Stylites on his lofty pillar outside of the walls of Antioch never committed any social or political blunders. For thirty years he lived upon his pillar, spending hours every day with his arms extended so that his body might stand out like a cross against the sky. Great crowds of admiring people gathered daily to see the holy man and to marvel at his unparalleled devotion. He was guilty of no social blunders because he was not in society. He made no political mistakes because he held aloof from politics. But his whole life was a stupid

and disgusting and unpardonable blunder. The Puritan was not a perfect man. He had the defects of his qualities, and these became conspicuous and glaring because he acted in a wide and open field. A man with an unruly temper who stays at home may by his temper make things disagreeable for his wife and children, but his ugliness will not work havoc with interests outside his own domestic circle.

But if that same man comes out of his seclusion and attempts to deal with large affairs of church and state, then his temperamental infirmities having a large sphere in which to work may do mischief in divers directions, and affect the comfort of many homes. The Puritan exposed himself to criticism by jumping into the arena and wrestling with the most complicated problems of earthly life, and if at many points he blundered, do not forget his numberless successes and immortal triumphs.

Some one says that the Puritan was too zealous. His manner was rough and not to be commended. The criticism is one to which every reformer is exposed. Men who saw Jesus in the act of cleansing the temple were scandalized by his action. He made a whip. When have men liked a whip? He poured out money on the ground. What a waste! He overthrew the tables. What needless violence!

He said in a tone which frightened, "Take these things hence!" Why did he not go at this work with the poise and quietness of a gentleman? Why did he not in courteous tones invite the cattle dealers to pass out? Why did he not give the men time to gather up their money, and why, instead of turning the tables upside down, did he not offer to help carry them out and set them up in a place both convenient and proper? The manner of Jesus was criticized by his contemporaries. It has been criticized continuously to the present time. And so also many men cannot under-

stand the fury of the Puritans. Why did they pull down the monasteries, and tear the priests' robes to pieces, and trample on sacred ceremonies, and say in a savage tone to cardinals and princes, "Take these things hence!" If this is a mystery to you it is because you lack the Puritan heart and the Puritan fire. You can never understand the Puritan manner unless you are ablaze with the Puritan zeal. Do you catch fire at the sight of injustice? Do you flame with indignation when you see the weak and helpless abused? Do you love God and humanity enough to quiver and thrill in the presence of men who, haters of God and enemies of man, trample down with their cruel feet interests which are dear to all hearts which have not lost out of them the spark which comes from heaven? How can you hope to sympathize with the Puritan unless you hate tyranny and despise religious mummery and loathe the things which hurt and slay? You yourself must have the soul of the Puritan if your heart is to go out to him with a full tide of affection.

You say that you cannot love him, that you cannot even like him, because he is disagreeable to get on with and altogether too strenuous. Whom do you like? You like a monk, a mild-eyed, sweet-faced dreamer, whose soft hands have no knack for overthrowing tables! Hang these three portraits on your right, Benedict, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Francis of Assisi, and these three portraits on your left, Calvin, Knox, and Cromwell. What a difference in the two types of faces. The eyes of the monks are soft, the expression of their faces is sweet; the faces of the Puritans look as though they were made of iron. Why this difference? The monks were dreamers, the Puritans were men of action. The monks were shepherds in green pastures where the waters were very still. The Puritans were soldiers on a field swept by black tempests from hell. You like the monks and so do I, but these men with

the iron faces bring from my heart a deeper reverence and from my soul a fuller homage. Down in the dust I prostrate myself before them for by their bloody sweat the things which men now count dearest were made ours forevermore.

To come into closer sympathy with the Puritan is one of the ways of increasing the efficiency of the twentieth-century church. What is the matter with present-day Christianity? We have too many monks. We Protestants do not believe in monks, but we have been diligent in cultivating them. The soul of monasticism does not lie in holy buildings or strange ecclesiastical garbs, but in a certain temper and attitude, and this temper and attitude are not peculiar to Roman Catholicism, but come up perennially out of the heart of man. Monasticism changes its form from century to century, but the essence of it remains forever the same. We smile at the quaint monasticism of the medieval times and imagine that all monasticism has vanished, whereas Protestantism in the twentieth century is swarming with monks, and how to convert them into Puritans is the outstanding problem of modern Christianity. The Protestant monk does not take any vows. He repudiates the vows of celibacy, poverty, and obedience. He believes in marrying, he likes to make money, he obeys no man but does as he pleases. But a man can marry and make a fortune and do as he will and still be a monk. He may separate himself from the world which he was sent to help redeem. He may hold aloof from social reform, and keep out of politics, and never lift his finger to lighten the burdens of the men who are oppressed. Through the day he may shut himself in behind the solid walls of his office or place of business, and at night he may seclude himself in the privacy of his home, reveling in the luxury of reading his magazines and books, having the same sort

of good time which the medieval monk had in his cloister when, far away from the tumult of the world and its fever, he spent the long hours in poring over the pages of poets and philosophers, refreshing his soul by visions and fancies, undisturbed by the entanglements and exasperations of a world which had gone wrong and which was crying night and day for some one to set it right. Our modern monk is a courteous and agreeable gentleman. He cultivates the family virtues. He is temperate, honorable, kind. He does not like reform movements, for they are always noisy and stir up trouble. He loathes politics, for politics, you know, are dirty. But he is a good man. He says his prayers, and now and then he sings "Jerusalem the Golden." He is a first-class modern monk. And this is the type of Christians which have been too common in our world. The day for the Puritan is upon us. There are going to be lively times in this country during the next thirty years. We are going to clean up a lot of things and make a host of crooked things straight. We are going to have a new type of preacher, for the seminaries are sending out men awake to the social problem, and we are going to have a new type of layman, men who are not afraid to overthrow the tables of the miscreants who by their practices defile the temple of human life. Christianity is going to be more virile, aggressive, radical. We have been monkish in our dealing with wickedness. We have not worked to transform the kingdoms of the world into the kingdom of God.

How has the church up to date dealt with war? It has played the part of a monk. It has mitigated the horrors of war. It has established Red Cross Societies and other kind-hearted agencies for relieving suffering and making the dying hour less horrible. And while the monk has been busy devising ways of reducing the horrors of war, other

men have been just as busy in building new cruisers and battleships and torpedo-boats, swallowing up the treasure of the nations, and keeping alive in men's hearts the thought of destruction and slaughter. Militarism is having a great day. It has deceived the very elect. It cries for millions and they are given, and then it cries for millions more and gets them. But some day there will come a type of Christian in England, France, Germany and America who will overthrow the tables of these monomaniacs who are always thinking and planning and getting ready for war, and will pour out the money which is now wasted in the enginery of slaughter into hospitals and schools and art galleries and other institutions which work for the uplifting and happiness of mankind. The church will some day overthrow the military tables.

But how can men overturn these tables or any others without stirring up the animosities of the men they interfere with, and bringing down on their heads the maledictions of all who are content with things as they are? Let a man in many parts of this country oppose the saloon in any effective way and he will meet with a storm of opposition and possibly be obliged to give up his life. Again and again within the last few years men who have overturned the tables of the liquor-sellers have been shot down in the street or murdered in their beds. Let a man take hold of any of the tables owned by men who coin money by the desecration of the Day of Rest, and he will be laughed at by all of the sweet-faced monks of the community and hated by all with whose vested interests he has interfered. Let him stand up against the advocates of militarism, tearing to tatters their arguments and blocking their way to still more colossal follies and madnesses, and he will be smiled at as an impracticable ignoramus who does not understand the world in which he is living. How can a

man in any land at any time overturn the tables, and still be popular? It is impossible. If a man is brave and true enough to do the Puritan's work, let him expect to meet the Puritan's fate, but let him not forget that he shall from the hand of God receive the Puritan's unfading crown.

THE MANY-SIDED CHRIST

V

On his head were many crowns.
REVELATION XIX:12

NINETEEN hundred years ago there lived on a rocky island in the Ægean Sea an exile by the name of John. He was an exile because he was a Christian. The island was lonely and the life of the exile was desolate. In his loneliness he meditated often on Jesus Christ, his master. On one Sunday suddenly the whole spiritual universe seemed to open out before him and he saw Jesus more vividly than he had ever seen him before. His face was majestic, his eyes burned like fire, and on his head were many crowns. That is the language of symbolism. That is the symbolic way of saying that John perceived that Jesus was supreme in all the fields of action. He was sovereign in all the realms of power. He was ruler in all the kingdoms of life. All sovereignties were gathered up in him. He was the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

Every careful reader of the New Testament is deeply impressed by the large number of names which are given to Jesus. On close scrutiny it is seen that these names were not given to him by others, but were chosen and applied to himself by himself. He seemed to take delight in choosing a variety of names in order to show forth the range of his personality and the scope of his mission. His favorite title was "Son of Man." That occurs many times in the Gospels. When you turn the pages of the Gospel according to Matthew you read, "The Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head," "The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins," "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath,"

"The Son of Man came eating and drinking," "Who say men that I, the Son of Man, am?" The expression occurs twenty-five times in that one Gospel. When he calls himself the Son of Man he is saying: "I am the son of humanity. I am the child of mankind. I am the real man, the ideal man, the kind of man that God wants a man to be. I am *the* man."

But he was not content with this title alone. He was in the habit of saying, "I am the light of the world." That was even more pretentious than the other title. It is an amazing claim for a man to make that he is the light of the world, because we cannot live without light. We are dependent on the light of the sun. We Americans are very clever in manufacturing artificial light, but we cannot live on it. If the light of the sun were removed we should all fade away. Jesus says, "I am the light of the world," and by saying that he asserts that without him humanity would droop and die.

On another occasion he said, "I am the bread of life." There are times when we want nothing so much as bread. Occasionally we like cake, but there are times when bread is far better than cake. We have all experienced moments when the most delicious thing in the world was just plain bread. Without bread we cannot live. Jesus says, "I am the bread of life." He said it to a company of men who had recently experienced the pangs of hunger. They knew what it was to be hungry and they knew what it was to be filled. It was to those men that he said, "I am the bread of life."

On another occasion he said, "I am the water of life." He said it to a woman of Samaria at Jacob's Well. She had nothing in her mind at that particular moment but water. She wanted water more than anything else. Jesus said, "If you knew who I am you would ask of me and I would give you living water."

At another time he said, "I am the vine and you are the branches." This was on the last night of his life. His disciples were brooding over the thought of separation. Death was coming and would cut the bonds by which Jesus and his disciples were bound together. He says to them: "I am the vine. You are the branches. Without me you can do nothing." He expected these men to work after he was gone, therefore it was incredible that death was going to cut the bonds by which they were bound together. Death cuts no bonds between Jesus and those who love him. He is the vine. We are the branches.

On another occasion he said, "I am the door." He said it on the day on which a blind man whose eyes had been opened had been cast out of the synagogue. The ecclesiastical leaders in Jerusalem were dogmatic and tyrannical men. They had no hesitation in excommunicating a man if the man dared to displease them. This poor blind beggar was ignominiously cast out, and this is what Jesus said: "I am the door. By me a man can come in and go out and find pasture." That means that no man is dependent for his salvation upon the decision of ecclesiastical lords. The way is always open to God through him.

On that same day he called himself "the good shepherd." Palestine was a land of sheep and shepherds. Every Jew knew the characteristics of a shepherd. The flocks were always small and it was possible for a shepherd to know every sheep by name. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. I know every sheep by its name and I am willing to lay down my life for the sheep."

In the upper room on the last night, when the disciples were all confused and depressed, Jesus said, "I am the way." A fog had blown in and obliterated all the familiar landmarks. The disciples did not know which way to turn or in what direction to start out. When one of them said, "I do not know the way," Jesus replied, "I am the way."

He went on to add, "I am the truth." These men were to go out and preach the truth, but they did not know what the truth was. They shrank from the ordeal of instructing the nations of the earth. Jesus said, "I am the truth." They felt that their very life was being taken out of them by the departure of Jesus. They could not conceive how they could live without him. Jesus said: "I am the life. My life is going to pulsate in you." Some time before this Jesus had said to two women who were weeping in the cemetery at Bethany, "I am the resurrection." They were mourning over the death of their brother. They believed in the resurrection, but this gave them no comfort because the resurrection was so far off. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection."

This same Jesus meets the exile on the Isle of Patmos and he says to him, "I am the alpha and the omega." Those are the names, as you know, of the first and last letter in the Greek alphabet. He goes on to explain, "I am the first and the last. I am the beginning and the ending." In other words, "All life begins and ends in me." Later on Jesus says to the same exile, "I am the bright and morning star." Darkness brooded over the face of the earth. The whole universe was plunged in gloom. There seemed to be no hope of deliverance anywhere. The brute forces were in the ascendency. Spiritual forces were impotent and everywhere defeated. But to this man oppressed by the darkness, Jesus says, "I am the bright and morning star. I am the star that points to the dawn. I am the star that tells you of the coming morning." Let us think, then, this morning, about the many-sided Christ.

We need a many-sided Christ because we are many-sided creatures. The psychologists tell us that we are made up of intellect and emotion and will, and we believe that this is so. We are all conscious of the fact that we have thoughts and emotions and that we make decisions. We need a Christ, therefore, who can appeal to our mind and

also one who can satisfy our heart and also one who can brace our will. But we are more than intellect and emotion and volition. We are a bundle of appetites and passions, and every appetite craves a different sort of gratification and every passion burns with a fire all its own. We have aspirations and yearnings and longings, and every aspiration climbs by a different stairway toward the stars. We need a Christ who can meet us on every stair in our upward climbing.

We can understand, therefore, why Christ chose so many names by which to image forth his character and personality. There are times when we want nothing so much as light. We say with Ajax in Homer's immortal poem, "Give me to see, and Ajax asks no more." But there are other times when we are not in conscious need of light. We are hungry. We want bread. There is nothing in the world that will satisfy us but bread. But again we do not want bread. We want water. We would not exchange one tiny cup of water for all the bread in the world, for we are thirsty and water is the one thing that we must have. There are other times, however, when we want nothing so much as a shepherd's care. We have lost our way and we are out in a storm and only a shepherd can save us. Again, we need nothing so much as a star. We are discouraged. The sky is filled with midnight. Darkness broods over us. Hope has died. There seems no hope that the world will ever grow better. We need a star, a star that will speak to us of the dawn and tell us of the morning.

Now, this myriad-sidedness of Jesus Christ is expressed in the very structure of our New Testament. Did you ever ask yourself the question, Why do we have four Gospels? Why would not one have been enough? The answer is that Christ is so many sided he could not have been completely presented to us by any one Evangelist. The Gospels are all

different from one another, and the more you study them the greater these differences are. To a person who reads only carelessly the four Gospels are very much alike, and in some respects they are alike. The similarities are very many and also very impressive. For instance, in every Gospel Jesus holds the center of the stage. In all of them we meet the twelve Apostles. In all of them we get acquainted with Martha and Mary, with Herod and Pilate, and with several other leading characters. We are face to face with a few cardinal events in all the Gospels—the trial of Jesus, his crucifixion, his resurrection. No wonder many people assume that the four Gospels are quite alike, but no one assumes that who is not ignorant. Ignorance is a kind of darkness which blots out all distinctions. There are many persons to whom all music is alike. They can tell the difference between "Yankee Doodle" and the long-meter Doxology, but they are not impressed by the difference between Mozart and Beethoven, or between Wagner and Puccini. There are some who pay no attention to the singing of the birds. To them all bird notes are alike. They can tell the difference between a rooster and a robin, but not the difference between a catbird and a hermit thrush. There are people who care very little for flowers. To them all flowers are much alike. They are all pretty, and most of them have brilliant colors, but beyond this their knowledge does not go. They can tell the difference between a sunflower and a pansy, but they make no distinction between a tulip and a lily, or between a peony and a dahlia. There are many persons who are so ignorant of the New Testament that they cannot tell one Gospel from the other, but persons who cannot distinguish the Gospels from one another are missing more than they know. It is in the recognition of distinctions and in meditating upon the differences that we get an enormous amount of knowledge and not a little satisfaction. That is why I am always urg-

ing you to live with the New Testament and to live in it, to read it again and again and again, to keep reading it always, for it is only by reading it constantly that one comes at last to know what the New Testament really is. Let us see how these Gospels differ from one another.

When you open the First Gospel and turn to Chapter V you find this statement concerning Jesus, "He opened his mouth and taught them." That is, Jesus is presented to you at once as a teacher, and all through this First Gospel he is opening his mouth to teach. It is in this First Gospel alone that you have the Sermon on the Mount complete. It is in this Gospel that you have fifteen parables, and a series of wonderful chapters of instruction, beginning with Chapter XX. When you turn to the very last page of the Gospel you find Jesus saying, before a cloud received him from men's sight: "Go, disciple the nations. Baptize them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them." This means that the disciples of Jesus are to be teachers. They are to unfold and apply the principles of the supreme teacher.

But there are many persons who are not interested in ideas. They do not want to be taught. All teachers are to them a good deal of a bore. It is surprising how many people do not care to think. They have no use for thinkers. Thinkers make them weary. But these people have great admiration for workers. They love a man who does things. There are persons who are thrilled by an idea. A new or a beautiful idea can thrill them down to their toes. There are other people who are never thrilled by any idea. They are thrilled by a noble deed. They have no admiration for thinkers, but tremendous admiration for doers. This type of person needs a particular Gospel and they have it in the Gospel according to Mark. In Mark, Jesus as teacher does not stand at the front. Mark paints us the portrait of a hero, a hero who performs mighty deeds. It would be

interesting sometime for you to study the first chapter of Mark intensely and see how different it is from anything you find in Matthew. There is one word in that chapter which occurs eleven times, the word *straightway*. In the King James Version the word occurred only four times, but it occurs eleven times in the Revised Version. This is because the Revised Version translates the Greek word always in the same way. The King James Version tried to break the monotony, and so sometimes it translated the Greek word *immediately* and sometimes *forthwith* and sometimes *straightway*. But in the Revised Version *forthwith* and *immediately* are dropped and we have always the word *straightway*. Mark says that straightway Jesus did this and straightway he did that, and straightway he did something else. He does not say straightway he said this or straightway he said that. Mark throws all of the emphasis on Jesus' deeds. He tells us he went into the synagogue, but he does not tell us what he said there. He tells us he went into Simon Peter's home, but does not tell us what he said there. He tells us that Jesus made a circuit of the Galilean cities, but he does not tell us what he preached on that journey. Mark is not interested in teaching. He does not seem to care much for ideas. He is very enthusiastic over what Jesus did. He tells us that in the synagogue he healed a man who had an unclean spirit and he tells us that in the home of Simon Peter he healed a woman who had a fever, and he tells us that in his circuit of Galilean cities he healed a man who was a leper. Jesus speaks only five times in this chapter, and in none of the five sentences is there a word of teaching. He says to two men, "Come after me and I will make you fishers of men." He says to the Twelve, "Let us go to the next towns, for I want to preach there." He says to the unclean spirit, "Come out of him." And he says to the leper, "Be clean, but do not say anything about what I have done." Mark is

not interested primarily in the ideas of Jesus, and therefore in his Gospel you have only four parables, two of them little bits of things, one consisting of three verses and one of four. There is no Sermon on the Mount in Mark. From first to last it is a Gospel which holds up Jesus as a doer of heroic deeds.

But there are times when we are not interested in heroes any more than we are interested in ideas. Teachers and heroes make us weary. We can stand them for a while, but we do not want them always. There are times when we need something quite different from ideas or from a shining example. We want kindness and sympathy and affection. We want to be loved. We want the tender touch of a physician, for we are sick. We are bruised. We are wounded and bleeding. We need the skill of a physician. In the Third Gospel we have Jesus as a great physician. The Gospel was written by a physician and it was natural that he should respond to the physician's side of Jesus' personality. The Third Gospel is the most tender of all the Gospels. Nowhere else is Jesus so sympathetic and so affectionate. In this Gospel he is especially kind to the poor, the poor were so generally neglected. In this Gospel Jesus is kind to women because women in Palestine were looked down on. In this Gospel Jesus was kind to Publicans. Luke tells us with great delight of little Zacchæus in the sycamore tree. In this Gospel Jesus is kind to Samaritans. Luke is the only Gospel that tells us the parable of the good Samaritan. In this Gospel Jesus is kind to foreigners. Luke takes delight in telling us about the first sermon in Nazareth in which Jesus reminded his hearers that Elijah was kind to a woman in Sidon and that Elisha was kind to a King of Syria. It was the kindness of Jesus to classes which were ostracized and hated that the Gentile physician took a special delight in portraying.

But there come times in every life when we do not

want a teacher and we do not care for a hero and we do not long for a physician. What we want is a saviour. We want somebody to deliver us from our sins. We are conscious of our weakness. We cannot break bad habits. We cannot get rid of ugly dispositions. We cannot escape the gnawing of remorse. We want a saviour. And in the Fourth Gospel we have the Saviour revealed. At the very beginning of the Gospel we hear a strong voice saying, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." You turn a few pages and you read, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life." You meet the Saviour all the way through the Fourth Gospel and at the very end of the book it is stated, "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Son of Man, and that believing, you may have life in his name."

It is because Jesus Christ meets us in all our needs and in all our moods that he becomes the Saviour of the whole world. In every one of the Gospels he is the great teacher, and in every one he is the supreme hero, the man who goes about doing good. In every one he is the great physician, gathering about him the sick and the forlorn. In every one he is the Saviour, forgiving men their transgressions and endowing them with a new life. But the emphasis of each of the Gospels is different from the emphasis of the other three. In the First Gospel the teacher is first, in the Second the hero is first, in the Third the physician is first, in the Fourth the Saviour is first. We need all the four Gospels to satisfy our needs. "Thou, O Christ, art all I want, more than all in thee I find. Raise the fallen, cheer the faint, heal the sick, and lead the blind."

THE COMMON SENSE OF JESUS

VI

Let us test the common sense of Jesus at four points. First of all let us hear what he has to say about prayer. It is easy to talk foolishly about prayer. A great many silly things have been said in its favor and other things equally silly have been said against it. The habits of prayer have often been ridiculous and much of the praying has come to nothing. What does Jesus say about prayer? He says in the first place that it must be sincere. If a man wishes to pray efficaciously he must not pray to make a show. His dominant desire must not be to make an impression on the people who are near him. He must aim to get into real communion with God, and therefore, instead of standing in the public square uttering pious phrases to attract the attention of the crowd, let him go now and then into an inner room and when he is in the room let him shut the door tight so that nobody can look through the crack, and when he is there all by himself where nobody can see him or hear him or guess what he is doing, let him speak to his Heavenly Father, and he will have his reward. He will then know what prayer really is. That sounds sensible, does it not?

Jesus goes on to say that a man must not indulge in repetitions, supposing that by his repetitions he will make a deeper impression on God. God cannot be imposed on by any such trick. By saying a prayer over twenty or fifty or a hundred times a man cannot induce the Almighty to be gracious. The God who rules the universe is a God of great good sense, and He cannot be wheedled into a friendly attitude by the repetition of pious phrases. Here again Jesus is talking sound sense. We all see how ridicu-

lous it is to suppose that the God who created the constellations and holds all the stars in His hand, can be pleased or moved by the repetition of pious words.

Jesus goes on to say that if a man is to get near to God he must come with the right mind. He must not be bumptious or vainglorious or put on airs in his praying. Furthermore, he must have a brotherly heart. He must not have contemptuous feelings toward his brother man. In order to get near a God of Love, a man's heart must be affectionate and sympathetic. This sounds like common sense. How could it be otherwise? How could a man get near God, the high and holy One who inhabits eternity, if he flounces into His presence with a strut, and how could a man get near the God of Love who has scorn and ill-will in his heart? In order to make this point clear and unforgettable Jesus told a little story. He often did that because the human mind is a story-loving mind, and while we forget definitions we hardly ever forget a story. The story which he told was this. Two men went into the temple to pray. One was a man high up in society. He was held in veneration by his neighbors. This man was deeply impressed by his own goodness and began at once to tell God all the good things he had done and was doing. He ended up by making a contemptuous reference to the other man who was praying not far away, and the only remark which Jesus cared to offer was that the man who had boasted and sneered did not get any good out of his praying. We all agree with him. That judgment is the judgment of every man of common sense.

Jesus also declares that if a man is to pray to his profit, then his life must be right. If he is on his way to the place of prayer and remembers that he has cheated somebody or lied about somebody, then he must go and make it up with that person before he begins to offer his prayer. It was Jesus' conviction that no one can be right with his Father

unless he is right with his brother. That certainly is plain common sense.

But Jesus has other things to say about prayer, and whether these are sensible or not I cannot say because they go beyond my knowledge and experience. He says, "Everyone who asks receives, and everyone who seeks finds, and everyone who knocks has the door opened to him." Here he announces a law which is universal. Just as the law of gravitation is universal throughout the whole physical creation, so is the law of petition and answer universal throughout the spiritual universe. I do not know, of myself, whether that is true or not, but Jesus says that it is true. So long as I keep with him in the little circle in which I am competent to pass judgment he is always sensible.

Therefore, when he gets into a realm beyond my experience I am confident that he is talking common sense still. So long as he is in a realm in which it is possible for me to check up on him I find that his common sense is perfect, and therefore when he goes beyond me and says things which I cannot, because of my ignorance, pass judgment on, I am willing to accept them as reliable and sound. It may be some of you do not pray or do not believe in prayer. You have said disparaging things against it. If you have said such things you have spoken nonsense. Everyone who condemns prayer speaks nonsense. The most sensible man who has ever walked the earth has said, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint."

Let us test him at another point. What is his idea of goodness? To define just what goodness is is not easy. There have been many curious notions of goodness, and many men have endeavored to be good in ways quite ridiculous. In the time of Jesus the popular idea of goodness was worship. A man was a good man if he worshiped God punctually and habitually. The religious teachers of

Palestine had found in their Scriptures this sentence, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength," and had decided that this was the first and greatest of all the Commandments. They revered that sentence so highly that the most devout copied it on a piece of parchment and put the parchment in a little leather box called a phylactery and bound that little leather box between their eyes, and some of them were so exceedingly punctilious that they tied another similar box around their left arm so as to keep that sentence as close as possible to the heart. But Jesus was not content with this idea of goodness. To him it was incomplete. Another sentence, he said, must go into the little leather box and be kept as near as possible to the heart, namely, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Worship and service must go together, if you want goodness. A man must love God, but he must also love man, if he wants to win the approval of his Maker. In order to make this clear he told a story. A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and on his way fell among brigands who beat him and stripped off his clothes and left him bleeding and half dead. A preacher came along, on his way to conduct public services in Jerusalem. He was all dressed up, as a man must be who is going to conduct public worship. He looked at the man. He saw that he was bloody. Now, a preacher does not wish to get blood on his cuffs, so this preacher hurried on. He arrived in Jerusalem, I presume, just in time to begin the service of worship. By-and-by another man came along. This man was a singer in the choir. He belonged to a vested choir. Now, if one is to sing in public worship he does not want to have his vestments soiled or in any way disarranged. This singer saw that the man was bloody and half dead and so he hurried on to Jerusalem in order to sing. But by-and-by an infidel came along. That was what a Samaritan was. He rejected two-thirds of the

Bible and refused to worship in Jerusalem. He was a renegade, an apostate, a reprobate, a dirty dog, in the opinion of every pious Jew. But this dirty dog got off his donkey, put his arms underneath the man who was bleeding and half dead, put him on his donkey, took him to a hotel, paid the hotel bill, and Jesus closes the story with the exhortation, "Now, you go and do that, too. That is the kind of goodness that God delights in." That is sensible. We all say that that is sound sense. Whether we do that sort of thing or not we know that we ought to do it. No one has ever been found ready to criticize the action of the Samaritan. He is known all over the world as the "good Samaritan." Jesus did not call him good. The New Testament does not call him good. Where did the word *good* come from? It came out of the human conscience. The human conscience watches that man put his arms under the man that was bleeding and half dead and the conscience says he is a good man!

Now, if Jesus is sane when he talks about human goodness, I am ready to believe that he is sane when he talks about himself. For instance, he says: "No one knows the Father but the Son, and no one knows the Son but the Father. I and my Father are one." I cannot easily believe that he talks like a fool when he talks about himself, and that he talks like a wise man when he talks about men. He often goes clean beyond me, but whenever he does I am confident that he is always talking common sense.

Let us test him at another point. What is a good rule of human conduct, a rule which we can carry with us wherever we go, which is short and simple and understandable and unforgettable? Is there such a rule available? Jesus says there is. He puts it in these words: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them. This is the law and the prophets." Or, to put the last part of the sentence into our own language,

"This is the Bible." That was the name which the Jews gave to their Bible. They called it "The Law and the Prophets." They had a longer title, but they did not often use it. The longer title was "The Law and the Prophets and the Psalms." In the last chapter of St. Luke's Gospel Jesus uses the full title. The Hebrew Bible, as you know, was cut into three sections, the Law and the Prophets and the Holy Writings. The first book of the third section was the Psalter, and therefore the title often used was "The Law and the Prophets and the Psalms," but that was a long title, and the title commonly used was "The Law and the Prophets." Jesus says that "whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them. That is the Bible." That is the core of the Bible. That is the thing which the Bible aims to do. It aims to produce men who will do unto others what they would have others do unto them. Some men always act the fool whenever they come near the Bible. They are sensible enough when they are talking about many subjects, but as soon as they begin to talk about the Bible they play the dunce. For instance, some men are always asking the question, Where did Cain get his wife? The preachers who preach Sunday afternoons in Hyde Park in the city of London tell us that that is the question which comes up out of the ignorant and unbelieving crowd year after year, Where did Cain get his wife? Think of the intellectual stature of a man who in the presence of the Bible can see no other question worth discussing but the question about Cain's wife! A man begins to read the Bible, and soon comes to the story of a woman being made out of a rib taken from a man's side. He closes the book at once. That one story is enough for him. He is amazed that any person with even ordinary wit can pay any attention to a book that contains that sort of stuff. Another man hears that the Bible says that a Jewish general one day ordered the sun to stand still in order that

he might have a chance to kill more of his enemies, and the sun, obedient to his word, stood still. That fills the man with deep disgust and he has no further use for the Bible. Another man hears that the Bible says that a whale swallowed a man and kept him in his stomach three days and three nights and then spewed him out on the land, and he laughs so loud that you can hear him a block away. Those three things are indeed mentioned in the Bible, but that is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible does not teach that a woman was made out of the rib of a man. That is an incident in an old story that came out of the distant past. It is found in one chapter of one Book. There are sixty-six Books in the Bible. If the Bible had wanted to teach the story of the rib it certainly would have mentioned it more than once. The idea of the sun standing still is taken from an ancient poem. Now, in poetry a man has a right to ask the sun to stand still, and what is still better the sun will do it. But the Bible does not teach that the sun stood still. The Bible has another purpose. It aims to teach something quite different. The Bible does not teach that the whale swallowed Jonah. That incident is related in an allegory, a book something like our *Pilgrim's Progress*. But the Bible was not written to teach men that a man can be swallowed by a whale and kept alive for three days and then spewed up. The Bible was written for a religious purpose. It was written to build up in men a right disposition. Jesus had no difficulty at all in reading the Bible. He never quibbled about anything that was written. He plucked the heart out of the Bible. He said: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them. That is the Bible." One day he reprimanded some men who were always reading the Bible and boasting of their knowledge of it. He said to them, "You are always reading the Bible and yet you do not come to me. You do not get the attitude or the disposition which the Bible was

written to give you." He was always sensible in his reading. He dropped out whatever parts of the Bible had become obsolete. For instance, the principle of retaliation was a principle which was sanctioned by the best men in the earlier stages of Hebrew history. According to the principle of retaliation you have a right to hurt your enemy as much as he hurts you. That is not a very high principle, but it is higher than the principle of unlimited vengeance, the principle which was in vogue all around Palestine in the earlier times. But Jesus saw that the principle of retaliation is not the highest. To the men of old that seemed a square deal, to take an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But Jesus says that there is a higher principle, the principle of benevolence. It is better to return good for evil, to overcome evil with good. It is far better to love your enemies than to try to kill them. That is common sense. We all accept it. That is the Bible.

When he shows such sound judgment in regard to matters in this world, I am ready to accept what he says in regard to the next world. He never argued the immortality of the soul. He made no effort to prove that a man lives after death. He assumed that as a self-evident fact. He could not conceive of God allowing the human personality to drop into nothingness in the moment of death. Personality costs too much. God has invested too much in it for Him to blot out his highest achievement in this world at the end of a career of a few years. "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. I will see you again." So he said with calm confidence on the last evening of his earthly life. I cannot check up on him when he speaks after this fashion, but I gladly believe what he says, for it is impossible for me to think that he becomes a fanatic or a dreamer the moment he talks about life after

death, when everything he has said about life on this earth is level-headed and sound.

Let us test him at one other point. What does he think of the power of love as contrasted with the power of physical force? Jesus says, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." A better translation is, "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth." He does not say, Blessed are the gentle, for they shall be highly rewarded in some distant and more spiritual world. He says, "Blessed are the gentle, for they are going to get this earth into their hands." That sounded ridiculous when he said it and to some people it sounds ridiculous still. He said, "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the Sons of God." That sounded insane when he said it. It does not sound so insane today. Nobody believed it when he said it. No ruler believed it. No professor in a college believed it. No Big Business man believed it. Nobody of any sense believed it. The triumphal arches had always been built for generals. The crowns had always been put on the heads of the war-makers. When Jesus therefore said, "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the Sons of God," everybody thought he was crazy. He said to the bravest of his Apostles, "Put up your sword, for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword." That was not counted worthy of a red-blooded man. But two thousand years have come and gone, and the world has been slowly coming around to the place on which Jesus stood. We are seeing more and more clearly every year that what he said was simple common sense. The violent are not getting possession of the earth. It is the peace-makers who are being crowned. The names of Briand and Kellogg will shine far longer than will the names of any admirals or generals who took part in the World War. The greatest event in the twentieth century is the action of the fifteen leading nations of the earth

saying to one another, "We are going to put up the sword." We have found that what Jesus said is sensible. We now know from history that those who have taken the sword have perished with the sword. In the World War we saw that all the European nations that took part in it were bled white. War is suicidal. Jesus said that two thousand years ago. Nearly everything that you have read about preparedness or about defense or about security is nonsense. There is no security except in good will. There is no sure defense but in friendship. There is no adequate preparedness in the art of living together except the lifting of the heart to high levels of neighborly feeling. Men who have eyes are all coming to see that to put up the sword is only common sense and that no other principle of international life is permanently workable but the principle announced by Jesus to Galilean peasants sixty generations ago. His common sense is sufficient for all times and all countries and all ages.

EXPECTANCY

VII

"*Maranatha.*"
I Corinthians xvi:22.

"Maranatha" was a common salutation. When one Christian met another Christian he greeted him with "Maranatha." He lit up the day by the declaration that the Lord was coming. When a Christian wrote a letter to his friends he often wrote at the end of the last page, "Maranatha." That was a benediction. He wanted his friends to know that he was still rejoicing in the expectation that the Lord was coming. "Maranatha" was a slogan which the soldiers of Jesus Christ repeated to one another as they went forth to the conquest of the world. They braced their hearts for the great battle by reminding them that the Lord was coming. "Maranatha" was a password which Christians in the early times made use of. When they went into their meetings, when they met before day in sequestered places, that was the word which gained them immediate admittance—"Maranatha." It was a word that was used at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. We have a volume, entitled *The Teaching of the Twelve*, which was written not far from the middle of the second century. In that book we are told that it was the custom, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, to offer a prayer of thanksgiving ending with the word "Maranatha." And so the celebration of the Lord's Supper came to have a triumphant tone by the repetition of the word "Maranatha." It is not to be wondered at, then, that all the translators have shrunk from tampering with the word. It is the same with this word "Maranatha" as it is with the

Hebrew words repeated by our Lord on the cross—"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani!" These words occur in the first two Gospels as they were spoken. There was a sanctity, an awfulness attached to them which made the early Christians reluctant to put them into any other tongue. But whether this conjecture is correct or not, the fact remains that all the translators through nineteen hundred years have refused to blot out the word "Maranatha" and substitute in its place any other word.

What a difference there is between the Apostolic Church and the church of our day. In externals, of course, they are worlds apart. The people in the New Testament all wore turbans on their heads and sandals on their feet. When they traveled they either walked or they rode on the backs of donkeys and camels. They had none of the comforts and luxuries which we enjoy. They had no telegraphs, no telephones, no railroads, no automobiles, no airships, no radios. Heaven and earth have passed away, all things have become new. Look at the pictures of Tissot and you look upon a world entirely different from the world in which we are living. But the interior world of the Apostolic Church was also entirely different from the mood of the church today. There was a spirit of expectancy in that church which we do not possess. There was a hope then which we have lost. There was a mood of anticipation, to which we are strangers. We do not say to one another, "Maranatha." We seldom think of his coming. That will account in large measure for the difference in spirit between the first-century church and our own. Their belief in the early coming of Christ gave an intensity to their life which ours does not possess. We are intense about certain things, but not about our religion. There was an other-worldliness in the church of the Apostles which has vanished. The early Christians kept their thoughts upon the other world, the world into which Christ

had vanished and from which he was soon to emerge again. We do not think much about the other world. The present world is amazingly attractive and it absorbs all our strength and time. It is a difficult world to manage and we have no time for any other. The Apostolic Church was a radiant church. A distinguished British scholar of Oxford University not long ago wrote a book entitled, *The Lost Radiance*. He notes a vivid contrast between the early church and our own. That church was jubilant and ours is not. The face of that church shone. Our face does not shine. One of the reasons why the jubilant tone has vanished is because we have lost the expectancy which the Apostles possessed.

Why have we given up our belief in the coming of Jesus? It is very largely because the Apostles were mistaken about the manner of his coming. They supposed he was coming dramatically, spectacularly, miraculously. They thought he would drop down out of heaven. Not only did one of them think that. They all thought it. Let me read you just two quotations. Luke, about thirty years after our Lord's death, went down into Palestine to get data from which to write his volume of church history. He talked with all the leading Christians he could meet. He got from their lips the important things which they believed. This was one of them: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." That was what Christians believed throughout Palestine thirty years after the crucifixion. Let us see what Paul believed about the same time. We have his belief recorded in I Thessalonians, fourth chapter, verses 16-18: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall to-

gether with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." That is very clear and very positive. The Lord is coming out of the sky with a shout. An archangel is going to speak. The trumpet of God is going to blow. All the Christians then alive, and Paul will be among the number, will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. That was Paul's joyful belief. Of that he had no doubt. That is the doctrine which he taught his converts. He told them to comfort one another by repeating the words which he had written. But in regard to the manner of the Lord's appearance Paul was mistaken, so were all the Apostles. Every one of them was mistaken. Their mistake is recorded in our New Testament. That mistake cannot be gotten rid of. It was a huge mistake, and it forms a part of the New Testament forever.

At this point let me inject into my sermon an extended parenthesis. Let me explain what has caused the commotion in our generation concerning the Bible. Why do we have so much controversy over the Scriptures? Why are Christians divided into hostile camps when it comes to a conception of the Bible? Many of you already know. Some of you do not yet know. I speak to those who do not know. It is very important that everybody should know just what has caused the controversies which have swept in recent years across the Christian world. We inherited from the seventeenth century a doctrine of inspiration, according to which the Bible is a dictated book. Inspiration, our fathers thought, meant dictation. God dictated his ideas to the Apostles, and they as amanuenses wrote down exactly what he said. The New Testament was a dictated book, and because it had been dictated by the Almighty it could contain no mistakes. Every sentence was true. Every idea was correct. God cannot be mistaken, and therefore in God's Book no mistake can occur. The

Almighty cannot be in error, and therefore it is absurd to look for errors in the Word of God. That was the belief of the majority of Protestant Christians fifty years ago, and then the world entered upon a new era. Groups of men began to study the Bible scientifically; that is, they began to search it with scrutinizing eyes. They observed it closely. They compared sentence with sentence. They weighed the sentences. They even pondered the syllables. They studied the New Testament precisely as Herschel studied the stars, and as Charles Darwin studied the plants and the birds. As the result of this scientific study of the Scriptures men saw that the dictated theory of inspiration is not correct. The Bible is not a dictated book for the reason that the Bible has errors in it. Here is one error that nobody can dispute—the opinion that Jesus was going to drop down out of the sky and that Christians were going to meet him in the air, and that all this was going to take place in the lifetime of the Apostle Paul.

Paul was the most learned of all the Apostles, the ablest of them all, the mightiest of all, but he was mistaken, and all the other Apostles were mistaken with him. When the fact became known in wider church circles that the New Testament contains errors, there followed a series of explosions. They occurred first in the theological seminaries because there the scientific study of the Scriptures had been carried forward with more thoroughness and boldness. The people outside the seminaries who did not know what was going on began to say that the seminaries were hotbeds of infidelity, that theological professors had been beguiled by the devil, and that all our young men were being led astray. Later on there were explosions in various churches. When a church had a scholar in the pulpit and he announced what scholarship had discovered, there was in many cases a great uproar in the pews. Some people left the church, others felt that the pulpit had been captured

by the Evil One. A great many people outside the churches, hearing the explosions and not knowing the cause of them, began to be troubled. The report went abroad that Christianity had been undermined, that the New Testament, after all, was a book of falsehoods, that the Christian creed was no longer reliable, and that the religion of Jesus was destined to pass away. That in a few words is the cause of the explosions which have attracted the attention of our modern world.

When you find that the New Testament is not a dictated book because there are errors in it, what are you going to do? The sensible thing is to modify your theory. You cannot change the New Testament. It remains what it has been, and what it is, and what it always will be. The only sensible thing is to modify your theory. Make your theory wide enough to take in all the facts. Somebody suggests that it is dangerous. I do not think so. Why should it be considered dangerous to acknowledge a fact? The universe must be a poor ramshackle affair if it will tumble down on you when you acknowledge a fact. The Christian religion must be exceedingly flimsy if it will topple over when you acknowledge a fact. Why should anybody be afraid to acknowledge a fact? It is a fact that there is this error in the New Testament. Why not face it and confess it? Why not let the whole world know that you know it is there? It is not at all dangerous to confess a fact. It is dangerous not to confess it. It is dangerous to play fast and loose with truth. It is dangerous to shut your eyes and refuse to stare into the face of an unwelcome fact. The only safe thing to do is to face all the facts without wincing and without running. Somebody suggests that it is very difficult to hold this new theory of inspiration, one wide enough to take in all the facts. That is all very true, but the difficulty is no objection to it. Everything is difficult in a world like this. The corpuscular theory of light is

difficult to manage. So is the undulatory theory of light, so is the theory of luminiferous ether, and so is the theory of relativity. The fact is that life itself is difficult to manage. We who have lived it the longest know that the best, but we have to manage difficult theories. The only thing for us to do is to believe that the men who wrote the New Testament were inspired. They certainly got light from heaven. They certainly were assisted by the Spirit of the Eternal. There is no doubt of that. It is equally clear that their inspiration did not preclude all possibility of error in opinion.

Little by little the early church sloughed off the mistaken conception of the manner of Jesus' coming. They came to see that he was not coming dramatically or spectacularly or miraculously. He was coming in another manner. That manner is described for us in the Fourth Gospel. The Fourth Gospel is the latest of all the Gospels. It gives us the maturest thought of Apostolic Christianity. There is a passage in the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John which you ought to read and mark and digest. There our Lord is represented as saying: "I will not leave you desolate. I am coming to you. In that day you shall know that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you." In other words, the coming of Jesus is to be invisible, spiritual, progressive. He is to come and dwell in the hearts of his followers, and through them is to save the world. Therefore it is a mistake to talk about the second coming of Christ. The proper expression is the "continuous" coming of Christ. He has already come many times. He is coming many times. In the present hour he will come and keep on coming. He is occupying the mind and heart of his people throughout the world. All this language in the New Testament concerning the coming of our Lord is capable of a higher and truer interpretation. When Paul told the Corinthians that the "Lord is at hand,"

he spoke the truth. He was at hand. He is at hand today. He will always be at hand. When John said, "Behold I come quickly," he expressed words that are true. That is what Christ said, and what he says, and what he will forever say. He is coming quickly. The proper response for us to make is, "Come, Lord!"

There are two serious errors by which the church is handicapped at the present hour. There are groups of zealous men, sincere and conscientious, who are so deeply impressed by what the New Testament says concerning the coming of Christ, they make it the cardinal and crowning doctrine of the Christian Creed. They are literalists and cling to the ancient opinion that the Lord is coming dramatically, spectacularly, and miraculously. He is coming out of the sky with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God. He is going to interfere in some mighty and overwhelming way, overturning the world that now is and setting up another. They say he is coming soon. They used to name the date. They missed it so many times they dare not do it any more. Only a fanatic of unusual stature ventures any longer to specify the day on which the Lord will bring the world to an end. They now use ambiguous adverbs. They declare he is coming "soon." Some throw all discretion to the wind and boldly assert he is coming "in the lifetime of men now living." The startling announcement is made sometimes in newspaper advertisements, and sometimes by posters on the billboard, and sometimes by flaming orators on the platform. Men and women of a certain type of mind and of a particular grade of culture are in considerable numbers powerfully impressed and swept away. These advocates of the Second Coming use the Bible with great agility, and hold up the present unhappy condition of the world as evidence that the last days have come. St. Paul told Timothy that in the last

days perilous times would come, and that evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse, and such a time, these prophets say, has evidently arrived. It is this combination of Scripture and present-day darkness which renders these modern apostles so persuasive and influential. According to their teaching there is no hope for the world through anything which mortals can do. They take no interest in social-betterment work, and upon all efforts for community uplift they pour the vials of their scorn. They denounce all international machinery for the establishment of world peace as devices of the devil. Arbitration treaties and world courts and leagues of nations have all been conceived in hell and are tricks to deceive the elect. Some of the more radical of these zealots are too advanced to take any interest in the ballot. They sneer at all efforts to get good men into office. What is the use? Only God Almighty can make the world better. They denounce all movements which aim at better laws. Legislation is of the Evil One. You cannot make society better by laws. Nothing can be accomplished by statesmen. Only the Lord God Almighty can cope with the evil of the human heart, and we can expect no improvement until he lays bare his strong right arm. Things must grow worse and worse. The more rapidly they get worse the happier we ought to be. It is not till they get as bad as possible that the end will come! What a pity that conscientious and well-meaning men should be so deceived. What a travesty of the Christian religion such teaching is! What a caricature of the Gospel of salvation is a message like that! An interpretation of life and God which reduces the soul to impotency must be false. A reading of the Bible which cuts the nerve of action is certainly a deadly superstition which all open-eyed lovers of the truth must resist and overcome.

But there is also another error against which we must be on our guard. You to whom I am speaking are in little

danger of being captured by the error to which I have referred. Your danger lies in the opposite direction. You know the Lord is not going to drop from heaven with a shout. You do not believe that the end of the world is at hand. You do not believe that Christ is coming in the manner so vividly pictured by traveling evangelists, and therefore you do not believe he is coming at all. You do not look for him soon or late. There is no expectancy in your eyes. There is no leaping hope in your heart. Maranatha is not in your vocabulary. You do not rejoice in an anticipated fresh disclosure of God's power. You think that men must do everything alone. No reliance can be put upon the Almighty. If the world is to become a better world it will become better solely through human effort. God will have nothing to do with it. It is for men to devise new schemes and lay out new programs. They should not count on any help from heaven. Whatever progress may be made will be the result of human cleverness and genius. Such is the opinion of many. This is a blighting error. This error, like the former one, cuts the nerve of action. It leaves us dubious and doleful. We are not sure whether our hopes will ever be realized, or whether our dreams will ever come true. We are not certain what man may be able to accomplish. As for God, he is a mystery. Christ has come and died and gone, and now we must struggle on alone. If Christ is not at the door, then the spirit of expectation dies. If we cannot say "Maranatha" there is no radiancy of hope. Alas for those who cannot face tomorrow with beating hearts eager to see some fresh unfolding of the power of God!

There is nothing more wonderful in modern science than its spirit of expectancy. The great scientists are all alike in expecting greater things tomorrow than anything known today. They do not prophesy small things, but great things, not common things, but wonderful things. No

matter what marvels have already been achieved, still greater marvels are coming. In laboratories all around the world eager groups of men are working, all of them expecting some new manifestation of the power of nature. They are looking among other things for a cure for cancer. They will find it because they are expecting it. The spirit of expectancy is the very breath of the nostrils of the scientific world. The church must catch that spirit if it is to conquer.

What do you expect for your church? What new thing are you looking for? What great thing are you counting on? Are you really expecting any fresh disclosure of God's power and love in your church? Or do you rather expect that the church will continue to travel along the old, drowsy, routine ways, learning nothing wonderfully new and doing nothing startlingly great? What do you expect for your city? Can any new thing take place in your city? What great thing can come to pass by God's help in your city? Or must your city continue to trudge along the old dusty road, repeating endlessly experiences which are monotonous and tame?

What do you expect? In what new form will God appear? What new work do you expect him to perform? With what fresh miracles will He crown this year? "Maranatha!" There is tragic sadness in St. Mark's description of Jesus' experience on his return to his own city of Nazareth—"He could there do no mighty work." And why not? They expected nothing.

THE DIFFICULTY OF BELIEVING

VIII

Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.
MARK IX:24.

"LORD, I believe a little. I want to believe more. I believe feebly, and I long for a stronger faith. I believe up to a certain point, but I want to go farther. But I cannot go farther without help. I cannot believe more unless I get strength from outside. Lord, I look to thee. I have a certain measure of faith, but I am still in the grip of unbelief. Rescue me from that!" Let us think about the difficulty of believing. It is often assumed that it is easy to believe. The fact is, it is the most difficult thing in the world.

The story from which the text is taken is one of the most graphic and unforgettable in the Gospels. Jesus and three of his disciples have gone up the slope of a mountain to spend a night in prayer. The other nine disciples are left behind at the mountain's base. While they are waiting there, a man with a sick son comes along, seeking for Jesus. He has heard of his wonderful healing powers, and he has brought his son, thinking that Jesus might be able to cure him. From the symptoms described it would seem the little fellow was suffering from what we now call epilepsy. He would now and then fall down in a spasm, foam at the mouth, and then lie for a season in a dead stupor. It was not possible to tell when these fits would come on. He would fall over into whatever happened to be near—sometimes into the fire, sometimes into the water, so that his life was always in danger. Thus the life of the lad was a continuous tragedy, and so always

was the life of the father, full of anxiety and fear and heartache. As soon as he heard that Jesus was in that part of the country, he hastened with his son to where Jesus was said to be. When he found Jesus absent, he presented his son to the nine disciples, imploring them to heal him. They made the effort, but did not succeed. On the next day, when Jesus returned, he found a great crowd and at the center of the crowd this father and his son, and the nine discomfited disciples. The scribes were making fun of them because they had failed. As soon as the father got the chance to speak to Jesus, he told him all that had happened. At the end of his story he cried in anguish: "If thou canst do anything, help us." Jesus did not like that manner of speech. "If thou canst!" he said in disdain. "It is not a question of my ability; it is a question of your belief. All things are possible to him who believes." It was at this point that the father exclaims: "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief!" Jesus calls for the boy; he is brought and cured. Later on the disciples had a private interview with Jesus, asking him, "Why could we not cure him?" and Jesus' answer was: "Because you did not believe." The whole difficulty lay in the lack of belief, not only in the heart of the father, but in the hearts of nine of Jesus' own disciples.

Let us think about how difficult it is to believe. Faith is a living thing, and like all living things it grows. And like all growing things it has its enemies and meets with obstacles which at times seem insurmountable. Jesus is always reprimanding his disciples because of their feeble faith. Nothing else so amazes him and nothing else calls for such constant and pathetic rebuke. "O ye of little faith!" One can hear the sob of the heart in that. "Why is it that ye have no faith?" "Be not faithless, but believing!" "Do not be afraid, your Father is going to give you

the kingdom!" That was the way he talked to them along the way. You and I would have scolded them for many things, but Jesus was most hurt by their defective faith. Their faith finally broke down altogether. Peter was the boldest and most confident of them all, but even he stumbled and fell, and after he had fallen headlong all of his companions succumbed, too. "They all forsook Jesus and fled." The crucifixion was too much for their faith. How completely demoralized Jesus' friends were by his death can be seen from Luke's story of the walk to Emmaus. Those two disciples had hoped that Jesus was the Messiah and would be able to redeem his people, but that hope had been forever extinguished. It is difficult to believe, especially in the vicinity of the cross.

Because it is so difficult to believe on Jesus Christ we are always trying to substitute something else for it. We cultivate superficial and sham beliefs, and imagine they are Christian faith. It is difficult to keep religion from degenerating into mummery. A considerable part of the religion of the world is superstition and formalism.

We Protestants have our mummery, and it is just as silly and empty as the mummery of the Roman Catholic Church. They have the mummery of ceremonies, and we have the mummery of ideas. They are zealous about forms, and we are zealous about theological notions. We believe in Jesus and we show our belief by saying that we accept the doctrine of the virgin birth. We believe that Jesus Christ is the second person in the Trinity. We believe that he performed miracles and that he arose from the dead. And because we accept these things we conclude we believe in Jesus. But this is not believing in Jesus. This is accepting notions about Jesus. You believe the virgin birth. What of it? Does that make you a better man or woman? Many a person has accepted that and not been

a whit better in thought or speech or conduct. You believe that Jesus Christ is the second person in the Trinity. What of it? Are you a better Christian because of that belief? Many a person has believed in the Trinity and kept a very selfish heart. You believe that Jesus Christ performed miracles. What of it? Thousands have believed that and been unscrupulous in business and contemptible at home. Accepting things about Jesus may be nothing more than a foolish and futile form of mummery. Believing in Jesus is surrendering oneself to Jesus, giving oneself up to him, allowing oneself to be swayed by his spirit, walking out boldly on his promises, identifying oneself with him, permitting him to make use of us as the instrument of his will. How difficult that is! How almost impossible it is! It cannot be done with ease, and it cannot be done in a minute. Faith is a growing thing, a progressive thing, and it advances from little to much and from much to more.

Ceremonies may be aids to faith, and often are. Thousands of Christians are helped by the rosary and by fasting and by the mass. By means of these, men are assisted to believe in Jesus. But these things in themselves are useless unless something better goes along with them. Ideas may be powerful helps in the life of faith. They often are. Thousands of Christians are stronger and nobler and happier because they accept the story of the virgin birth, and the doctrine of the Trinity, and the tradition of the miracles and the resurrection. These are aids to belief in Jesus. But they are useless unless they lead us toward the goal—the sinking of our life in the life of the Son of God.

There are many who believe in Jesus a little. They believe that he can heal a sore finger or a bruised toe. He is equal to a slight headache, but he cannot cure the cancer which is eating at the vitals of mankind. He can cure a

mild fever, but he can do nothing with an epileptic. Probably the majority of Christians today are where the majority of the Twelve were nineteen hundred years ago. We are face to face with certain incurables, and the Scribes are looking on and asking, "Why can't you cast the demons out?"

Let us look at three of these incurables. The first is the commercial-industrial world. Professor Jacks of Oxford University says that the future of civilization depends on our ability to change the present social order. Our present order has got to be changed if the race is to get on. There came a day when feudalism could not go on. There is coming a day when the present capitalistic system cannot go on. The present order is based on competition for private profit. That basis must be changed to coöperation for public service. But some men say it cannot be changed. Business is business and you cannot change it. Competition is the life of trade, and you cannot get on without it. The economic laws are inexorable and Jesus Christ has nothing to do with them. Thousands of men believe that, and not a few of them are in the Christian church.

That the present order is not Christian everybody admits. Young men in large numbers are cynics—made cynics by the spirit and practice of the business world. They laugh at the ideals of Jesus as high-flown and visionary. "Business is business, and business and religion will never mix."

But those who believe in Jesus know that business and religion will mix. They are mixed already and will be mixed more and more. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of this state has just now declared that the natural law of supply and demand is not applicable to the business of landlords when they are letting their houses. Why not? Because this law of supply and demand clashes

with the law of mercy. And when an economic law clashes with the law of mercy, the economic law goes down. Economic laws are abstractions born in the selfish hearts of men, the laws of Christ are eternal, and to them every other law must ultimately bend. The business world is going to be Christian, commerce is going to be conducted on the principles of Christ. He is Lord of the vast empire of industry and business. The mind of Christ is being spread over widening areas of the world of trade. Thousands of Christian men in the realm of business are experimenting, striving to give the ideas of Jesus fuller sway. Some of the greatest and bravest workers for the kingdom of God in our generation are men engaged in business. There is a demon in the commercial industrial world, but it will come out: "Lord, we believe. Help thou our unbelief."

Ireland is another incurable. The popular impression is that an Irishman is a fighting animal. However it may be with other men, it is agreed that an Irishman loves a fight. For eight hundred years he has fought England, and if that quarrel can once be ended, then North Ireland will fight South Ireland and South Ireland will make war on North Ireland—and if the North and South should ever be reconciled, there are prophets who say that a North Irishman would fight a North Irishman, and that a South Irishman would fight a South Irishman. In all the future there is certain to be fighting in Ireland. So the cynics assert.

But Ireland is supposed to be a Christian land. Most of the people in North Ireland are Protestants and most of the people in South Ireland are Catholics. The Irish Catholics are loyal devotees of the Pope, and no other Catholics can surpass them in zeal for their religion. The Irish Protestants are stout defenders of the faith. Belfast is one of the

homes of orthodoxy. In South Ireland they are particular about the rosary and the mass, and in North Ireland they are particular about the Bible and the divinity of Christ. And yet multitudes of Christians in Ireland give themselves up to suspicion and violence and hate. The fact is that these haters are not believers. Thousands of Orangemen are not Christians; they are pagans. And thousands of Irish Roman Catholics are not Christian, either; they are pagans. But shall we give up hope for Ireland? Is Ireland incurable? Will she always fall now into the fire and now into the water? Will she forever fall down in spasms and foam at the mouth? Can the Son of God do anything for a country like that? He can! He will! Irishmen will some day believe in him. They will surrender to him. They will give themselves up to love. North Ireland will assist South Ireland in a hundred gracious ways, and South Ireland will minister to North Ireland with a beautiful devotion, and the North and the South will be united in friendly feeling for the people of England. Lord, we believe—half heartedly we confess. Wilt thou help our unbelief?

Here is a third incurable—Germany and France. When you put them together you have one of the outstanding invalids of the whole world. How can these countries ever love one another? Think of what Germany suffered from France from the days of Louis XIV down to the days of Napoleon III. Think of what the great Napoleon did to Germany, crushing her down into mire and blood. Recall the lurid eloquence of the French Chauvinists who for forty years before the great war poured out the vials of their wrath upon Germany in the Place de la Concorde. And think of all that France has suffered at the hands of Germany. Think of the iron hand of Bismarck and the bloody hand of Von Moltke, and who can forget the un-

speakable ferocity of the Potsdam gang of Barbarians who through four awful years beat French cities and fields to dust, and left Northern France a scene of chaos and desolation. Certainly these nations will never be anything but enemies. Both countries are full of suspicion and jealousy and hate and the burning fires of revenge. Foes they are and foes they will be forever! So say the unbelievers.

But Germany and France are supposed to be Christian countries. Northern Germany is Protestant. Germany has been the great modern teacher in theology. Her theological schools were unsurpassed through the last half of the nineteenth century. The preachers of the world for two generations fed on the books written by German scholars. Germany was prolific in ideas. She furnished them to the whole church of God. South Germany is largely Catholic, and nowhere does the fire of religion burn with an intenser flame. The rosary is used every day, and the mass is celebrated perpetually. Germany is Christian and so is France. What cathedrals the latter possesses! All her roads are lined with crosses—symbols of the sacrifice of the loving Jesus. France has been baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Will these two Christian countries ever join hands? They will. Will their hearts ever be twined together? Yes. Will they be good neighbors? They will some day be ardent friends, helpers of each other, coworkers in the great work of the Lord. They will not always foam at the mouth. They will be cured. Lord, we believe. Help thou our unbelief!

How difficult it is to believe! How well-nigh impossible to believe. It is difficult to believe in the presence of those whom the world counts incurable. It is difficult to believe in America. There are many obstacles here and one must make great sacrifices in order to believe. But it is more difficult to believe in Ireland and greater sacrifices must be

made there. Blessed is the man who in Ireland pleads for reconciliation and forgiveness and love. But it is still more difficult to believe in France and in Germany. The wounds are still bleeding. The grass is not yet green. The agony still tears the heart. Blessings on the men who in Germany or France dare to say: "Let us extend the brotherly hand. Let us be comrades in Christ."

What is the matter with the world? The answer is easy. The root of our trouble is unbelief, not simply the unbelief of confessed unbelievers, but the unbelief of believers themselves. The unbelief of the outside world is appalling, but the unbelief in the church is unspeakably tragic.

Why are we so timorous? Why do we shrink back? Why are we afraid? It is because of our unbelief. Believe in Jesus Christ and you are not afraid of anybody. Believe in him and you do not quail before any foe. Believe in him and you face the future with undaunted heart. Why are we ill at ease? Why are our spirits troubled? How can we explain this restlessness which runs like a fever through all the world? This is due to our unbelief. We do not believe that Jesus can cure the cancer which gnaws at the heart of the world. Why are we so doleful? Why does not our heart sing and our face shine? Why are we not radiant and jubilant? It is because we do not believe. We are browbeaten by appearances. Goodness seems weak and evil seems strong. Truth seems feeble and falsehood seems mighty. Love seems fragile and hate seems unconquerable. But it only seems. When we believe in Jesus we know that goodness is stronger than evil and that truth is mightier than falsehood, and that love never fails. The real Christian believes that Christ is King.

> Well roars the storm to him
> Who hears a stronger voice
> Across the storm.

The man who believes in Jesus knows that "God is in

his heaven and that all is right with the world." No matter what the obstacles, Christ wins at last. No matter what the delays and disappointments, Christ triumphs in the end. In spite of suffering and loss and repeated defeats, Christ is the eternal conqueror. Lord, we believe! But we need a lot of help!

THE ONE FOUNDATION

IX

Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians iii:11.

We New Yorkers are wide awake to the importance of foundations. We are living in a city which has a genius, almost a mania, for building, and we are in the midst of the greatest building era that the city has ever known since Henry Hudson sailed up yonder river which bears his name. One of the most amazing phenomena of our generation is the rise of these great buildings which stand around us on every side. They go up, as it were, by magic. They go up almost in a night. Every one of them stands on its own foundation. The foundation is the first problem with which the builder is obliged to grapple. Everything depends on the foundation. The cost of the building is determined by the cost of the foundation, and the height of the building is conditioned by the strength of the foundation. Sometimes they miscalculate the cost of the foundation. In one instance I remember they miscalculated to the extent of $500,000. They did not find the particular kind of rock they expected to find at that point in the island. They had to go deeper, at an enormous expense. Visitors to our city are greatly impressed by our skyline. It is talked about all over the world. It is quite picturesque and altogether unique. We sometimes forget that there is another important line, the foundation line. The only reason why we can build so high in the air is because we go down so deep into the earth. We are not building bungalows on Manhattan Island at present. We

are erecting enormous structures, buildings of granite and steel and marble that weigh many thousands of tons, and it is absolutely necessary that the foundation shall be sure.

What is going on in the physical world is going on in our mental world. All thoughtful people are today greatly interested in foundations. Ever since the World War we have been deeply concerned about the bases on which we are building. We are inquiring into the foundation of our social customs, and some of us are thinking about the foundations of our economic order. There are men who are studying carefully the foundations of our educational system and there are others who are investigating the foundations of our civilization. There are some who think that the foundations of our civilization are rotten, and that our civilization will some day collapse, just as the Aztec civilization collapsed when the final strain came.

Science is going deeper all the time. The chemist is going to the bottom of the atom, and the biologist is going to the bottom of the cell, and the physicist is indefatigable in his efforts to understand the basis of the physical universe. This same disposition extends throughout the world of religion. Religious people are thinking far more deeply today than they thought twenty-five or thirty years ago. Many thinkers are pondering the question, What is the foundation of religion? On what are we building? Are we building on fancy or on fact? What is the ground of belief? Are we building on mist or on the everlasting rock? It is not surprising that we have a group of Christians who are known as Fundamentalists. In other words, they are Foundationists. They are greatly interested in foundations. They have found what they think are the foundation stones on which the whole Christian structure rests. These stones are five in number: The inerrancy of the Scriptures, the virgin birth of Jesus, the physical resurrection of Jesus,

the substitutionary doctrine of the atonement, and the imminent and spectacular appearance of Jesus Christ to wind up the present dispensation. There are Christians who believe that if any one of these five foundation stones is removed the whole Christian Church will collapse.

On the other hand, we have a group of Christians who are known as Modernists. The Modernists also claim to be Fundamentalists. Indeed, they contend that they are more fundamental in their thinking than are the Fundamentalists themselves. The charge which they make against the so-called Fundamentalists is that they do not go deep enough. It would be a good thing for us all if both these names could be banished from our vocabulary. Party names in the Christian Church always work mischief. The church of the city of Corinth was cursed by partisanship. There were four parties and they filled the Church with controversy and dissension and ill-will. St. Paul swept all their party names aside and exhorted them to fix their eyes on the foundation. They were all building on the same foundation, and it was important that every member of the church should see what the foundation really was. Paul declared that the foundation was Jesus Christ. In other words, the foundation was spiritual. It was not a definition or a formula or a proposition or a doctrine. It was a mind, a heart, a character, a spirit, a person. It was the person of Jesus Christ. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid." That is what we may call Pauline fundamentalism. It is the soundest form of fundamentalism which the world has ever known.

This conception of Paul in regard to the church's foundation runs through all his Letters. In his Letter to the Romans he says, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." It does not make any difference what he thinks or what doctrines he holds; if he lacks the spirit of Christ he does not belong to Christ. He expresses the

same idea in another form in the thirteenth chapter of this first Letter to the Corinthians, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love—the spirit of love—the spirit of Jesus Christ—I am making no contribution to the harmony of the world. All I am doing is making a little noise." In his last Letter to Timothy he says: "The foundation of God stands sure. The Lord knows them that are his." Paul went out of the world saying, "I know whom I have believed." This is Pauline fundamentalism and the world will never know a better.

One of the causes of the commotion in the Christian church of our day is due to the fact that most of us were brought up on the tradition that Christianity is founded on a book. It has often been said that Christians are the people of a book. This is an error. Christians are not the people of a book. They are the people of a person. The Christian church is not built upon a book. It is built upon a person, the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus never wrote a book. In the Fourth Gospel we are told that on a certain occasion he stooped over and with his finger wrote something on the ground. Nobody knows what he wrote and whatever it was it was blown away by the next gust of wind. It is surprising that he never wrote anything when we bear in mind that he was a Jew of the first century and that the religious Jewish leaders of that time were all bibliolaters. They worshiped their Scriptures. They considered every word and even every letter of divine importance. They reverenced every jot and tittle, or as we would say, they counted the dot of every i and the crossing of every t. Their most influential and most highly honored man was the scribe, the man who was an expert in the Scriptures. Wherever he went he carried a book with him and also a huge key. The key was the symbol of his authority to unfold the meaning of the book. Jesus never carried a book. The scribes preached out of a book.

Jesus never did. The thing that most amazed the peasants of Galilee was the fact that Jesus did not get his message out of a book, but out of himself. He spoke as one having authority and not like the other religious teachers of his day. It is surprising that he did not write a book, because he was ambitious to exert a wide and deep influence on the minds and hearts of men. In our day men of ideas are eager to write books. It is by writing books that their ideas are carried to the end of the world. It is counted indispensable in the twentieth century to publish a book if a man wishes to make his influence count for most. Now Jesus' supreme ambition was to influence the largest possible number of men. He desired to get his ideas into the minds and hearts of all his contemporaries. He dreamed of influencing the minds of men down to the latest generation, and yet he never wrote anything. He was not dependent on a book.

Nor did he ever command anybody to write a book. He never asked anybody to make a record of his deeds or his sayings. We know this because if he had asked anybody to write the story of his life it would have been his Apostles. He chose twelve men early in his career upon whose brains he wished to write his ideas. These men lived with him, walked with him, ate with him, talked with him. Into their ears he poured all the things that he wanted to say. It was these men who were to carry on his work after he had gone. If he had ever asked anybody, therefore, to write an account of his teachings it would have been one or more of these twelve men. Peter was the leader of the apostolic band, and if Jesus had asked anybody to write his biography it would probably have been Peter, but Jesus never asked Peter to write anything. There is no Gospel according to St. Peter. There is a Gospel, however, according to St. Mark, and the Gospel according to St. Mark is really the Gospel according to St. Peter. Mark was a young man

who lived in Jerusalem. His mother was one of the followers of Jesus. Mark early became acquainted with the Apostles and after the death of Jesus Mark became the assistant of St. Peter. He was his traveling companion. He heard him preach. After several years had passed Mark wrote down the substance of Peter's preaching. How many years he waited we do not know. Why he wrote his little book we can easily conjecture. Churches were springing up in various localities, and in many of these churches there was no one who had in his possession an accurate account of what Jesus had done and said. It was only natural that the early Christians should want a book, and Mark wrote one. There is no evidence that Peter asked him to write it. He wrote it solely because there was need for it.

Some of you may think that in the Gospel of St. Matthew we have an authentic work of one of the Twelve. But the Gospel of St. Matthew in our New Testament was not written by the Apostle. A bishop of the second century makes a reference to a little book known as the Logia of Matthew. Just what this book was nobody knows, but it is surmised that it was a collection of the sayings of Jesus written down by the Apostle Matthew. How many of the sayings were recorded nobody knows. We can easily understand why Matthew would write down some of the words which fell from Jesus' lips. He was a clerk in the employ of the Roman Government and was quick in the use of his pen. When Jesus said something especially striking or more than usually beautiful it was only natural that Matthew should write it down. In every congregation there are a few persons who jot down on paper any sentence of the sermon which strikes them as especially noteworthy or important. They write it down not because the preacher asks them to write it down, but because they want to write it down in order to preserve it. If Matthew

jotted down some of the sentences of Jesus he did so not because he was commanded by Jesus to do it, but because he held these sentences precious and wanted to be sure to retain them in the exact form in which Jesus had uttered them. But this little book of Matthew's is only a small part of our first gospel. In our Gospel of Matthew there is incorporated almost the entire Gospel of Mark. Men who have sufficient leisure to do this sort of work have compared the first two Gospels sentence by sentence, word by word, syllable by syllable, and they have found out what you and I would never have found out for ourselves, that the man who wrote the First Gospel made use of nearly the entire Gospel of Mark. He made use not only of the ideas of Mark, but of his very phrases and words. Our First Gospel, then, is a composite work made up not only of the Gospel of Mark but also of the sayings recorded by Matthew and also of several other documents, just how many we cannot say.

When we come to the Third Gospel its author tells us very frankly just how he came to write. Other men were writing the story of Jesus' life. Not all of these stories were reliable, and so a Gentile physician by the name of Luke makes up his mind to interview the men and women who were best posted in regard to what Jesus did and said, and he throws his material into the form of a little book which he dedicates to a friend of his, Theophilus. He wants him to have in his possession a document on which he can confidently rely.

There has long been a controversy in regard to the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. We call it the Gospel of St. John, but the scholars are not agreed as to which John is meant. Many scholars believe that it was written by John the son of Zebedee, and I agree with their conclusion. But if the Fourth Gospel was actually written by the son of Zebedee, who was one of the Twelve, it is evident

that Jesus never asked him to write it, for the Gospel as we have it was not written until forty or fifty or possibly even sixty years after Jesus' death. John evidently had no intention at first of writing a Gospel. It was only when he was old and men began to think of his death and reminded him what a loss the world would suffer if he did not write down on paper the things which he remembered most vividly in Jesus' life, it was only then that he wrote what the Christian church has long considered the most precious of all the Gospels.

It is clear, therefore, that Jesus never asked anybody to write a book. The Christian church existed long before the New Testament was written. The church is not built on a book. It is built on Jesus Christ. When Paul wrote this first Letter to the Corinthians the New Testament was not in existence. None of the Gospels was yet written and not more than two of the Letters, and yet the foundation was laid. The foundation could not have been a book. The foundation was Jesus Christ.

Not a few Christian men and women are a good deal disturbed by the flood of speculation and skepticism which is now flowing across the world. Some of them are considerably alarmed. A few are almost panic-stricken. They feel that the foundations of Christianity are being moved. Indeed, they have come to suspect the solidity of the foundations of religion itself. All such persons are needlessly alarmed. There is not the slightest danger of the foundation of the Christian church ever being removed. The foundations on which religion builds are just as solid and indestructible as are the foundations of science and philosophy and art. Jesus Christ is the foundation of the church and you can never banish him from the world. His mind has entered into the mind of the human race and it is impossible ever to get it out. His spirit has entered into the heart of humanity and, like leaven, it is working and

will continue to work until it has leavened the whole lump. The character of Jesus is in the eye of the world and his image will never fade. You can no more pry with a theory the person of Christ out of the soul of this world than you can with a crowbar pry one of the constellations out of the floor of heaven. You cannot get rid of the Himalaya Mountains or the Pacific Ocean by any speculation or theorizing. Nor can you get Jesus of Nazareth out of the life of the human race by any conjectures or philosophizings. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, and that foundation is Jesus Christ." Mr. Stanley Jones, the well-known missionary to India, has told us in his interesting little book, entitled *The Christ of the Indian Road*, how when he first went to India he felt that he must defend the whole Bible. His line extended from Genesis to the Book of Revelation. He found himself fighting all up and down the line, sometimes behind Moses and sometimes behind David and sometimes behind Paul. Not only did he feel he must defend the Bible, but he must defend the Christian church, and not only the Christian church, but all Western civilization. He discovered that it was a difficult thing to do, and by-and-by he found it was impossible. He was worried. He felt that the heart of the business was being left out. He came to see at last that the only citadel which a Christian minister is called upon to defend is the person of Jesus Christ. He is the only one to be presented. He is the only one who is to be lived. For Christ himself is the Christian religion. The Gospel lies in Christ. Christ is the Good News. Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Let every man, therefore, take heed how he builds.

A NEW-YEAR'S SERMON

X

Stand upon thy feet.
EZEKIEL II:1.

A NEW-YEAR'S sermon ought to have a short text. Only a short text is likely to stick to the mind. A long text is almost sure to get caught by the rough surfaces of the passing days and be torn away from us, so that before we have reached the month of February the last vestige of it has disappeared. But a short text is not so readily snatched from us. It sticks to the mind like a burr, and we can carry it through the winter, and through the spring, and through the autumn, and out into the winter again. I have been looking for such a text.

A New-Year's text should have tonic in it. It should put iron into the red corpuscles of the blood. It should have in it something of the sound of a trumpet, and when it rings in our ears it should set the fiber of the soul vibrating. I have found such a text. I found it in the old book of Ezekiel at the beginning of the second chapter—"Stand upon thy feet!" who said that? God. To whom did he say it? To Ezekiel, a man whom God wishes to send on an errand. Why does God say, "Stand upon thy feet"? He says it because Ezekiel is flat on the ground. As soon as Ezekiel realizes that he is in the presence of God his strength all leaves him, and he throws himself on his face. The sense of his insignificance paralyzes him. The consciousness of his ignorance and weakness and unworthiness overwhelms him. He crouches like a slave. He crawls like a worm. He lies upon the ground like a man who is dead. And God tells him to get up. "Stand on your feet,"

he says, "and I will speak to you. I cannot speak to a slave. I cannot communicate my message to a worm. I cannot make my meaning clear to a man whose higher powers are all paralyzed. Stand up! Take the posture of a man and I will then tell you what I want you to do!"

It is evident from this that a man can carry his humility too far. There is a humility that deafens us to the voice of the Eternal. There is a self disparagement which makes it impossible for us to hear what God has to say to us. Self-depreciation may so benumb the heart that it does not respond to the appeal of the Divine Spirit. It is only when we stand upon our feet that God can make known to us his ideas and plans.

God speaks to us in different ways. He speaks to the attentive mind through nature. An ancient poet knew this when he wrote:

> The heavens declare the glory of God
> And the firmament showeth his handiwork.
> Day unto day uttereth speech
> And night unto night showeth knowledge.

Through the phenomena of the physical world God is continuously sending messages to all of us who can hear. He speaks to us also through the experiences of human life. He says things through the events which come to pass. He makes his mind known through the achievements and sufferings of mankind; he is always speaking to us through the experiences of our own hearts. He speaks to us also through days. These also are media of revelation. He spoke to us recently through the 21st of December. He spoke to us in a different tone through December 25th. Once again He spoke to us distinctly through the last day of the old year, and now through the first Sunday of a new year He is speaking to us again. I have been listening intently to catch what He is saying, and I have heard Him say this: "Stand upon thy feet!"

The year 1933 has gone and it has gone forever. It can never come back again. Nobody wants it back. It had 365 days and that was enough! We have no use for any such days again. The year has gone. We will concern ourselves about it no more. While it was here we often worried about it, but our worries about it now are ended. We need plan for it no more. Like a dead Egyptian it lies on the shore of the illimitable past. We now can go forward and attend to something else.

What a feeling of exhilaration comes over one in the first days of a new year! What is the cause of this? Do you not think it is due to a fresh sense of liberty? At the beginning of a year we all feel we are free. At the end of a year we are often in the mood of a fatalist. As a year grows older it becomes crabbed and stiff, and we cannot do anything with it. We are its bond servants. But when January comes our fetters seem to fall off and we have the bounding joy of men who have been delivered from prison. The world has suddenly become malleable again, and we can hammer it into shapes of our own choosing. The universe has grown plastic once more. Like a big lump of clay it lies in our hands and we can mold it at will as the potter molds the vase. A new year means a new opportunity. We have a new chance. We feel as we used to feel in school when a fresh page of a copy-book was opened before us. We now have a chance to do better.

But while I am saying this I hear a remonstrating voice coming up out of the depths of the heart. This voice says that all years are alike. They have always been alike and always will be alike. The year 1933 was like the year 1932, and the year 1934 will be like the year that has just ended. That is what the voice is saying, but the voice is a voice that speaks falsehood. The worst lying that is done to us is not the falsehoods told us by our fellows, but by the mischief-making voices that sound through our own souls.

When a voice in our soul says that all years are alike, that voice is telling a lie. The years are not alike. No two years are alike. No two years can ever be alike. No two years have ever been alike since the wild time began to coin itself into calendar months and days. The year 1933 was different from all the other years that have ever been, and the year 1934 will be different still.

Even if this new year wanted to be like the last year, we can by our own will power make it different. We can make it different by doing something we have never done before. This opportunity is always open to us. Some of you have lived ten years, and others twenty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, and others eighty, but no matter how old you are you can do something in 1934 that you have never done before since you were born. By doing that new thing you will make the whole year new. I do not know what that new thing is. You can easily find it out for yourselves. You can do more this year than in any year of all your lives. You can do more of the very thing you have been doing the most of. By doing more you will make the year different from all its predecessors. You can rise to a higher level of thought and feeling and conduct. No matter how high you have lived you can live higher still. The way upward is always open. The heights tower above us, forevermore inviting us to climb.

> So nigh is grandeur to our dust
> So near is God to man
> When duty whispers low, "Thou must,"
> The youth replies, "I can."

But here again I hear a remonstrating voice. The voice says: "I know myself. I know my limitations. I know my disposition, my temper, my nature, and I know I was never intended to be religious. I was never cut out to be a saint!"

All this is false. You do not know yourself. That is the

very thing you do not know. How could you know yourself? How can you be so deluded as to imagine you know yourself? How can you know all the gold that lies packed away in the hidden pockets of your soul? How can you know the powers which lie asleep in the innermost chamber of your heart? How can you know the possibilities which lie wrapped up in the particular combination of gifts with which God has endowed you? Put away the foolish notion that you know yourself. And how dare you say that you were never intended to be religious? That is the very thing you were intended to be when you were created. That was the divine intention, that you should be religious. You were given a nature which has immeasurable capacities for reverence, and adoration, and forgiveness, and sacrifice, and service. Never be so foolish as to think you were not intended to be religious! And as for not being cut out for a saint, that is the very thing you were cut out for. You were cut out to dedicate yourself to God, and to live a consecrated life, and to do the work of a servant of the Almighty. You have no idea of how tall or how white a saint you might become if you only gave yourself up completely to God. You might become a more wonderful saint than Francis of Assisi, a more powerful saint than St. Augustine, a more beautiful saint than St. John himself. Never indulge again in such stupid talk. Never say again that you were not cut out to be a saint.

You are a child of God. That is a commonplace of our religion. We ought to ponder it and try to take in at least a little of its meaning. If you are a child of God you are created in God's image. You have his nature. Some of the divine mind is in you. Some of that mind that planned the heavens and drilled the shining armies that go marching down the avenues of space. Some of the divine heart is in you—that heart of infinite compassion which throbs at the center of all that is. If you are indeed a child of God,

then some of the eternal fire is in you, and that fire can never be extinguished.

Since you are a child of God, stand upon your feet. An earthly parent does not want his children to crouch before him, to crawl like so many worms, to lie upon the ground half dead. He wants his children to stand up in his presence, for it is only when they are on their feet that he can say to them the things that lie in the parental heart. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God." The apostle paused a moment at that point and then wrote: "And such we are." Let us say it often to ourselves—"And such we are!"

Stand upon your feet in the presence of all the evils by which this unhappy world is afflicted. Do not crouch before them like a terrified slave. Do not fall down like a dead man in their presence. Stand on your feet, and defy every custom and every institution which is contrary to the will of God. It is the tragedy of this world that men have always gotten down in the dust before the faces of the devils by which humanity has been plagued and tormented. Men said that the gladiatorial games could not be abolished, and that the practice of torturing prisoners in order to ascertain the truth could not be done away with, and that persecution for witchcraft could not be wisely suspended. In the lifetime of some of us, men said—learned men and good men—that slavery could not be abolished, and only the other day nearly everybody, it seemed, said that the saloon could not be overthrown. O timorous and unbelieving man, why don't you stand on your feet? Many evils have been abolished, and all other evils likewise must go. Poverty must be abolished and ignorance must go, and war must be abolished and armaments must go, and money competition as the ruling motive in the business world, that must be banished. All these plagues

and curses must be driven from the earth, and they can be gotten rid of when once men dare to stand on their feet.

But at this point I hear another remonstrating voice. It says, "Ah yes, these evils may possibly go, but it will be a long time yet. It will be years, it will be generations, it will be centuries, it may be millenniums before the strongest of them have disappeared." But that is a voice from the pit. What have you to do with times and seasons? Leave times and seasons alone. God has put those in his own hands. It is not for us to bother ourselves with calendars and dates. We are here to do our work. We are to go on the mission on which we are sent. We are to repeat the message which God has put on our tongues. As soon as Ezekiel got on his feet God went on to tell him what he wanted him to do. He wanted him to go to the people and tell them face to face what the will of Heaven is. Of course Ezekiel winced. He quivered and shrank back, but God said to him: "Go speak my message! They are impudent and stiff-necked, but speak to them nevertheless! They will not listen to you, perhaps, but go right on speaking whether they hear or whether they forbear! Do not be afraid of their words. Do not be dismayed at their looks. Go on and speak my message. Do not become rebellious like them! Stand on your feet and I will tell you what I want you to say."

The same thrilling exhortation comes to us. "Stand on your feet and I will speak to you," says the Lord God Almighty. We listen, and this is what we hear: "The world is impudent and stiff-necked. Its face is brazen and its heart is hard. But go on and do your work! Do not be afraid of men's words. Do not be intimidated by their looks. Keep on saying that everything that ought to be is going to be, and that everything that ought not to be is going some day to disappear. Do not trouble yourself about times and seasons, but never forget that the spirit

of the Almighty has been promised you, and that he will be with you till you have carried your triumphs unto the uttermost parts of the earth!"

Stand on your feet! A great many men today are down. They are not prostrate before God, but they are paralyzed by the host of problems and perils and evils by which we are confronted. When have we come into the new year with so many men on their faces? Some are pessimistic about the church. The church, they say, is in a state of decadence. Religion has lost its grip on the heart. The church has failed and must fail always. Others are despondent about the state. They feel that democracy has come upon its last days, that the masses of men cannot be trusted, that civilization as we have known it is destined to crystallize in other forms. Others are gloomy-hearted over society. To them it is hopelessly frivolous and irretrievably corrupt. Others have lost faith in human nature. Man, they say, is, after all, nothing but a brute. A brute he has been from the beginning and a brute he will be to the end. Civilization has put over him a thin and fragile veneer, but, after all, man is a savage, and a savage he must be forever. That is the way men talk when their mouths are in the dust. That is their speech when they have suffered paralysis of the higher faculties of the mind. O doleful-hearted man, stand on your feet and hear what God has to say to you. The church of Christ is not doomed to pass away. Because a congregation here and there is not so large as it used to be, or because family worship has disappeared from many a Christian home, it does not follow that the church is decadent or that it will dissolve and pass away. Stand on your feet and hear these words: "On this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Do not anticipate the speedy dissolution of democracy. Government of the people and by the people and for the people is not going to

pass away. Men may think many foolish things and engage in many a wild experiment, but every heart is open to the Eternal mind, and every soul can share in the Infinite wisdom, and since all souls belong to God, and God is the inspirer of them all, democracy will never pass away. Stand on your feet and listen to what God says of human nature: You do not know all that is in man. You know something of the evil which is in the human heart, but you have never measured the dimensions of the goodness that lies hidden there. Jesus of Nazareth knew what is in man, and this is what he said of a race which was about to nail him to the cross, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." And so it has been told us by the Son of God himself that there is down deep in the heart of every man something indescribably beautiful and altogether divine. The heart may be rebellious for a season, but at last it surrenders to the appeal of love. Man in his innermost essence is not a brute and not a savage; he is by nature the child of a merciful and loving God.

Stand on your feet, O men and women, and be ready to go forward on your mission. Arise from the ground. Do not lie prostrate, paralyzed either by doubt or by fear. Get up out of the seat of the scornful, if for an hour you have sat down there. Stand on your feet like obedient servants of the King. Do not crouch or tremble or crawl. Stand on your feet like children of your Heavenly Father, and do your utmost to bring a rebellious world back to Him.

"Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." It is impossible to say what our wisdom or our power shall be when we stand full statured in the presence of Him who made us. Of one thing we are certain: We shall be like him! Like whom? Like the ideal man—like the well-beloved Son—like Jesus Christ, "for we shall see him as he is."

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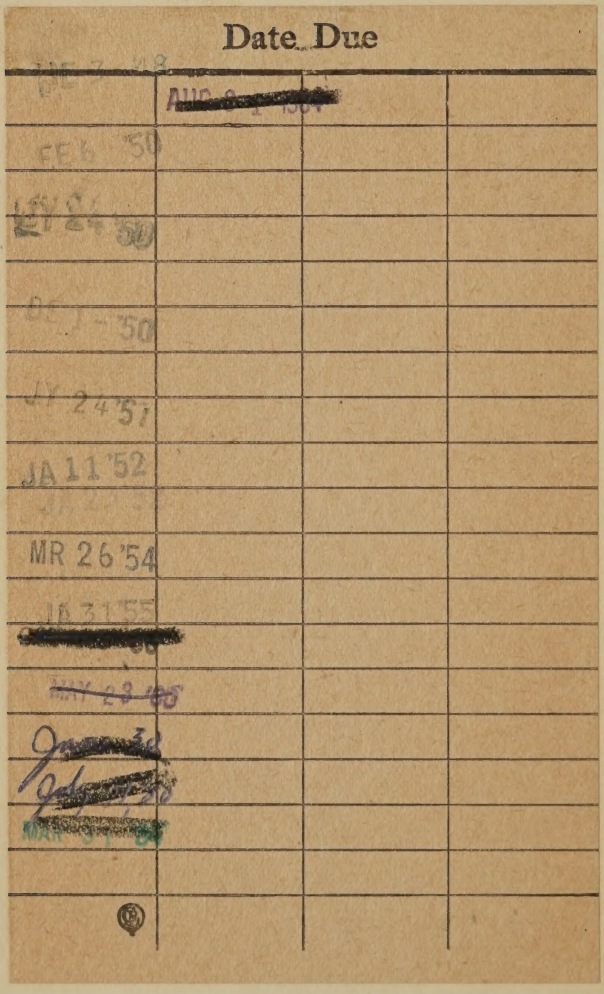
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